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(CEDAW)

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Fourth periodic reports of States parties

COLOMBIA*

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* For the initial report submitted by the Government of Colombia, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.32 and Add.32/Amend.1; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.94 and 98, and Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/42/38), paras. 452-502. For the second and third periodic reports submitted by the Government of Colombia, see CEDAW/C/COL/2-3/Rev.1; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.250, and Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/49/38), paras. 450-498.

FOREWORD

As a contribution to the building of knowledge on the status of women in the world, Colombia has prepared its fourth general report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), thus becoming one of the few countries to have taken action to collect valuable information for the attainment of the Committee's objective, in the spirit of the United Nations.

The present report is a diagnostic tool which updates the information on the lives of women in our country since 1991, the year in which the new Constitution came into force. It thus offers an analysis of the advances and of the political, economic, social and cultural obstacles which Colombians have encountered over the last six years. It was prepared jointly by five consultants specializing in the various topics dealt with in the report, working under the leadership of the National Office for Equality for Women, and it was revised by the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Employment and Foreign Affairs. It was finally approved by each of these Ministries and by the responsible minister of the National Office's Advisory Commission and was endorsed in its entirety by the Foreign Ministry's Office of Special Affairs.

In order to achieve greater clarity and internal consistency and to bring together in a single text knowledge about women which is generally fragmented and dispersed, the report was constructed on the basis of a comparison of the reality of social practices and the new constitutional framework, as it affects women, with each of the articles of the Convention. This approach, which is consistent with the methodology proposed by CEDAW, facilitates a more detailed assessment of the fulfilment of Colombia's commitment to the Convention and demonstrates its firm intention to compile additional information on the topic, which will provide the country's various agencies and institutions with a clearer understanding of the purposes of equality for women. In short, this report constitutes not only an effort by the Colombian Government to reaffirm its ratification of the Convention but also the most up-to-date study of the situation of women in our country.

Even though the third report described the constitutional framework, it was thought essential to include it in the fourth report as well, in order to provide a more detailed picture of the progress made in recent years. In fact, many of the principal legal developments have been consolidated only since 1994, which is why the statistics presented relate mainly to the period 1993-1995.

The report is not intended for CEDAW alone: it also seeks to establish a dialogue with every one of Colombia's institutions and citizens. It is thus written in such a way that any reader may consult it without needing to refer to the preceding reports and will find that the report can be used as a composite tool for learning about the situation of Colombian women.

In addition, in order to facilitate the work of consultation and research, the report has an introduction which summarizes the overall content and is subsequently amplified for each of the articles of the Convention. The sections on individual articles are drafted so as to constitute self-

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contained and complete units. The fact that they sometimes approach a single topic from different perspectives makes some repetition inevitable. But this seemed preferable to running the risk of presenting incomplete information on the various points discussed. The result is a truer picture of the legislative and programmatic aspects and of the social reality of Colombia's women.

The compilation of a coherent and unified body of knowledge about Colombian women is in fact the main contribution of this report, which of course constitutes a useful tool for changing this social reality, not only in Colombia but throughout the world, for the framework of the struggle for equality for women stretches far beyond frontiers drawn on maps.

INTRODUCTION

ADVANCES IN THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN COLOMBIA

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

In recent years the situation of Colombian women has undergone fundamental changes as a result of the adoption of the new National Constitution and an economic development model based on the internationalization of the economy, and as a result of the recent formulation of policies on equality for women and the creation of specialized State agencies to promote and apply these policies and ensure that they are followed up.

According to the 1993 national census Colombia has 35 million inhabitants, 51 per cent of them women; it has a modern urban structure, and 70 per cent of its population lives in towns and cities; it has modern nation-wide production and financial systems and extremely capable business leaders, and it has taken important steps to improve living conditions, in particular with respect to access to education, health, public services and low-cost housing.

As a result of its economic performance and low population growth Colombia has enjoyed a rapid increase in per capita income, to about $US 1,650 in 1995, even though this figure remains low in the Latin American context.

Life expectancy has increased and illiteracy has declined to very low levels; the workforce has become more skilled and major progress has been made in the scientific sphere and in the production and use of sophisticated technology; women have entered the labour force in very large numbers and in higher education they have numerical equality with men.

However, the improvements in the situation of women in Colombia have been due more to far-reaching policies for the country's democratization and modernization than to specific policies for the achievement of equality. Furthermore, although Governments have set targets in terms of both quality and cover, the progress has been quantitative rather than qualitative.

In fact, although the changes over the past five years have taken place against a background of a good economic performance, it cannot be denied that there are many paradoxes and contradictions connected with the exacerbation of violence of every kind. The country has an extremely unequal regional distribution of income, and half of the population has been left untouched by the benefits of modernization. The development plans have in fact given priority to quantitative growth on dubious assumptions of redistribution and have encouraged the concentration of income and the social inequality apparent in the high levels of poverty.

The crisis in the public administration, the corruption, impunity and widespread violence are rooted in a chain of causes and effects within the prevailing social system. This fact and the persistence of alarming levels of poverty, together with the widening of the incomes gap between urban and rural areas and the persistence of manifestations of violence point to the urgent need to promote alternative models of development to facilitate the participation of the whole population in the country's progress.

In recent years economic policy decisions have been designed to consolidate the internationalization of the economy and the reforms of the State required for that purpose. The social-policy measures have been basically designed to alleviate the burden of poverty borne by large groups of the population.

The Government which came to power in August 1994 proposed a sharp change of direction in the development model. Although it regards market liberalization and competitiveness as useful incentives in the economic process, it recognizes that, given the existing economic and social inequalities, these incentives do not in themselves operate as efficient and fair distributors of resources. The State has therefore made a firm commitment to equitable social development based on the new constitutional and legal mandates which address the development of the economic, social and cultural rights of the whole population.

Accordingly, the 1994-1998 National Development Plan: the Social Leap Forward contains strategies designed to foster economic growth with social equity and proposes major increases in public social expenditure, which is to rise from 10 per cent of GDP (1991-1994 average) to 13 per cent in 1998. The acceptance of the social aspect as an indispensable component of economic development and as a premise of human development marks an important conceptual step forward in the approach to public policies and the role of the State in the attainment of the targets.

But the attainment of the targets depends on macroeconomic decisions and the demonstration of the political will to counter the historical tendency to cut social budgets in response to changes in the economic and/or political climate. The initial results of the Plan illustrate the difficulties faced by the State in taking this approach in our country, given the confluence of internal and external factors with an enormous capacity to destabilize the economy and society.

Within the proposed approach the policy of equality for women is one of the seven social development strategies: the educational and cultural leap forward; comprehensive social security; housing, urban development and disaster prevention and relief; the policy for equality and participation of women (EPAM); policies for young people, indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian and ethnic communities; small landowners; economic solidarity and justice, human rights and public safety. Basic importance is thus attached to women in the dialogue maintained by the State in this field. However, it must be admitted that the translation of the strategy of equality for women into programmes and social services is being affected by the current economic slowdown.

PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATION

Through actions by all three branches of public power Colombia is continuing to strengthen the trend in its constitutional and legal system

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towards equality between men and women and equality of opportunity for both sexes.

In this way, and always in accordance with our democratic Constitution, important social laws have been enacted on education, social security, dissolution of religious marriage, and protection of women heads of household, as well as the more recent laws designed to prevent and punish violence in the family. All of this legislation implies a direct or potential benefit for Colombia's women.

Actions of _tutela_ are being increasingly used by women as a constitutional means of immediate protection of their basic rights; in addition, the Constitutional Court has developed important legal precedents on the protection of the rights of girls and women.

The following have been the main advances in legal equality:

* The incorporation of the legal equality of men and women in the 1991 Constitution, with special measures to help groups suffering discrimination or marginalization, pregnant women and women heads of household, and with a mandate to achieve the appropriate and effective participation of both sexes at the decision-making levels of the public administration.

* Where family relations are concerned, today men and women enjoy the same constitutional and legal rights and have equal obligations as couples and as parents. These rights are stated expressly in the laws on the dissolution of religious marriage, the distribution of property in de facto marriages, the recognition of the value of domestic work at the time of such distribution, and the equality of children born in and out of wedlock.

* Women have political rights on an equal footing with men; they possess the same legal capacity as men in civil matters; and they enjoy equality with respect to freedom of movement and choice of residence, as well as with respect to the acquisition, loss and restoration of nationality and the transmission of nationality to children.

* Both the Congress and the Executive have made progress with important social reforms, especially in education, health, employment and access to public housing and services. These reforms do not always have a specific intention of favouring women, but they do not contain any discriminatory measures and do benefit women in the sense that the National Office for Equality for Women and women's organizations press for the removal of the obstacles to women's access to the resources and services which the reforms are consolidating.

* The use of actions of _tutela_ and the decisions of the courts have helped to correct situations which discriminated against women.

Despite the advances made in legislation with respect to equality and equity, various kinds of obstacle to the effective application of this legislation persist:

* The enormous gaps in the establishment and functioning of machinery to

monitor and control the application of the laws.

* The existence of cultural factors which have a practical effect on the application of the regulations in all areas, for the patriarchal culture is a serious constraint on the introduction of changes which will diminish its predominance. The influence of this culture manifests itself in many different social practices: in most cases it is the man who determines where the family lives; there are moral prejudices against the new forms of family life; violence against women remains a means of wielding power; pregnant and breastfeeding mothers often encounter difficulties at work; women are at a disadvantage in separation and divorce proceedings; and in the exercise of political rights, despite their high level of participation in party organizations and as voters very few women - in comparison with men - are nominated and elected to public office, represented at the managerial levels of the parties or appointed to decision-making positions in the public sector.

* The persistence of an institutional culture which, taken as a whole, does not endorse any clear intention to eliminate the inequalities suffered by women.

* The lack of effective machinery for enforcement of court decisions, owing to the poor training of police and court personnel in the regulations and procedures applicable to family disputes and conciliation.

* The failure adequately to publicize the regulations and rights so that women can have recourse to them or claim them and so that the legal and other authorities can effectively apply the regulations and protect the rights.

* Colombia has a poorly developed legal and social culture of affirmative action, which is still viewed with suspicion, as if - ironically - it amounted to discrimination. The collective consciousness is dominated by the idea of a formal equality which denies the specific differences of women and their social disadvantages. Accordingly, the positive action stipulated by the Constitution concerning women's participation in the public administration has not been translated into legislation, despite the efforts of some members of the Congress and the women's social movement.

PROGRESS IN INSTITUTION-BUILDING

Colombia has made considerable progress in creating institutions to deal with women's and gender issues in application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and fulfilment of other international commitments.

The State now has several institutions for this purpose:

* The National Advisory Commission on Equality and Participation, a bodv which advises the President of the Republic; it is headed by a minister appointed by the President and its membership is drawn from high-level civil servants and representatives of women's organizations.

* The National Office for Equality for Women, which was created by Law 188 of

July 1995 as a top-level Government agency responsible for coordinating activities to promote the equality and participation of women. It began functioning in January 1996 as an agency attached to the Office of the President but with an independent structure and its own budget.

* The National Network of Women's Agencies, made up of 32 offices or similar bodies at the departmental and municipal levels.

* The Parliamentary Network, made up of congresswomen of various political affiliations.

* The specialized women's offices or other bodies responsible for promoting the application of sectoral policies (Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Investment Cofinancing Fund (DRI), Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health).

The following factors facilitate the work of these bodies:

* The existence of a basic body of knowledge about women and the obstacles to their advancement.

* The experience of women's organizations and NGOs.

* The strength which earlier circumstances invested in the progressive positions which Colombia has taken at world conferences, in particular the conferences on women, population and development, and human rights.

The following are some of the difficulties encountered by these bodies in carrying out policies to secure equality for women:

* The shortage of human and financial resources, which affects the capacity of the National Office and its advisory organs to provide technical assistance to the sectoral agencies and delays the mainstreaming of women's needs and interests in policies and programmes for women.

* The lack of personnel specializing in the issues of equality for women.

* The fact that the National Office is an advisory and not an executive agency means that it and its subsidiary organs can merely make proposals and that the implementation of proposed activities depends exclusively on the attitude of other ministries and State agencies.

* The institutional requirements of decentralization with respect to the character and dynamics of local processes and the human and financial resource needs.

POLICY FOR EQUALITY AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN (EPAM)

Since 1990 successive Governments have drawn up specific policies for women which have been approved by the National Economic and Social Policy Council (CONPES), the country's principal policy-making body. The Government which came to power in 1994 established the policy for equality and participation of women (EPAM), which was not only approved by CONPES but also incorporated in the National Development Plan and converted into a Law of the

Republic (Law 188 of 1995), thus demonstrating the State's firm political intention to promote the equality of women and equal rights for women in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres.

The central and local strategies include research, education and training, information systems, development of legislation, support and technical assistance for central and local agencies responsible for planning and implementing programmes, and communications. They also cover linkage, dialogue, discussion and negotiation with women's organizations and NGOs and, of course, the management of international cooperation.

In practice, progress in policy formulation is impeded by many difficulties which stem from the State itself, threaten the effectiveness of its political intention and impair the implementation of the programmes:

* Macroeconomic decisions which limit public expenditure and affect primarily the social programmes.

* The lack of political will on the part of central and local agencies to accept and support the programmes. This attitude illustrates the gap between ideological discourse and practice.

* The embryonic nature of the culture of institutional support for equality and equity.

* The rigidity of the administrative systems and the systems for participation of civil society at all levels.

* The gap between discussion of the transversality of the dimension of equality for women in public policies and the instruments of social policy, given the persistent focalist and residual conception of activities designed to improve the situation of women.

With a view to overcoming these difficulties, the National Office has given priority to the sectoral work with the Ministries of Education, Health, Environment and Agriculture, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, the National Planning Department, and the National Training Service (SENA). Each of these bodies has established a coordination unit and a joint working group and has initiated new activities or strengthened existing ones in the education and training of civil servants, research into specific situations by sector, and planning of institutional alternatives for mainstreaming the issues of equality for women, and the respective mandates of each body under the National Development Plan.

Situation of women and progress in the sectoral mainstreaming of EPAM

Education

During the 1990s a major effort was made to give effect to the constitutional mandates for universal access to basic education, decentralization of education services, and participation of civil society in educational activities.

As part of this policy the Government promulgated Law 115 of 1993, whose principal mandates were set out in the National Development Plan 1994-1998, and drew up the Ten-Year Education Plan 1996-2005. This Plan gives special emphasis to the objective of eliminating all the situations of gender discrimination or isolation with respect to entering and remaining in the education system.

The 1990s have also seen achievements which are improving the situation of women. These achievements include:

* Maintenance of the tendency for more women to enrol in the various levels of education. In 1993: girls accounted for 52.5 per cent of the preschool enrolment, as against 50.7 per cent in 1991; girls provided about 50 per cent of pupils in basic primary education, without any great change from previous years; in secondary basic and secondary vocational education girls accounted for 52.9 per cent of enrolments, an increase of 3.7 per cent over 1990; and in higher education women made up some 52 per cent of the student population.

* The rates of female dropouts from the various levels of formal education and the numbers of female graduates continue the trend of earlier years of greater efficiency in the education of girls in relation to boys, as measured by retention in the system. However, the causes of dropouts remain closely linked to gender stereotypes which, as noted in the section of this report on article 10, have a negative impact on both sexes, but especially on boys.

* The trend towards employment of more women teachers in the initial levels of the system has continued, but the proportion of women declines through the levels up to higher education. However, in the present decade women have increased their representation in higher education by two percent.

* Gender stereotypes have a strong influence on vocational options but this influence is declining, as can be seen from the enrolment figures for the various special subjects of secondary and higher education.

* There has been a slight reduction in the rate of female illiteracy from 9 per cent in 1990 to 8.4 per cent in 1993.

* The Ministry of Education, the women's offices which have operated under the Office of the President under various organizational schemes, and the present National Office for Equality for Women have achieved progress in the institutional efforts to introduce the dimension of equality for women in the education system. A number of activities have been carried out to this end:

* Research and consultation to document the issues of equality between women and men in the education sector with respect to the State examinations in secondary education; review of the Sex Education Programme of the Ministry of Education; systematization of information relating to the training of teachers in the subject of gender discrimination in schools; and analysis of the National Development Plan to identify the strategic areas of education policies for gender equality.

* The Ministry has a unit dealing with this topic, but it has not been given adequate status or logistical support. Today, in order to strengthen this

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work, a programme on equality for women has been initiated with the cooperation of UNESCO, and an internal working group has been set up. The Ministry and the National Office are drawing up short- and medium-term action plans to form part of the policies and programmes.

* Where programmes are concerned, the Ministry has developed an interesting procedure for awareness-raising and training for civil servants in the central administration responsible for promoting the integration of the policy of equality within the Ministry, and for the personnel of the departmental education offices. It has also designed and published a teacher-training manual on the question of sexist content, compiled nationally and internationally produced teaching materials on gender and education, and introduced an experimental methodology for in-service teacher training, which it has tested with more than 500 teachers, head teachers and university professionals.

* The Ministry, the National office, the People's Network for Women's Education (REPEM) and UNICEF are developing a strategy of awareness-raising and incentives for publishers of school textbooks, with a view to securing changes to help to eradicate gender stereotypes from such books.

This sectoral work has encountered difficulties of very different kinds, but without doubt the most decisive ones are the resistance of civil servants and teachers to changes in favour of equality for women and the tendency of senior officials of the Ministry of Education to make commitments more in words than in deeds. However, there has recently been a greater political will to support progress in these areas.

Health and social security

During the 1990s this sector has made significant progress on the following fronts:

* In 1995 the life expectancy of women was 72.3 years, an increase of 10 years over the last three decades. The average life expectancy of men was a little lower at 66.4 years.

* In 1994 the maternal mortality rate fell to 78.2 deaths per 100,000 live births from the 1986 figure of 119.82. At present the Ministry of Health, with international assistance, is implementing an action plan to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality and a plan to promote the comprehensive health of women.

* The fertility rate calculated for the period 1990-1995 was 2.7, representing a decline of almost 23 per cent over the 15 preceding years.

* Infant mortality has declined by 48 per cent in the last 20 years from 54 to 28 deaths per 1,000 live births.

* Major improvements have been made in the regulations governing health and social security, including the promulgation of Law 100 of 1993 on comprehensive social security, which establishes a contributory system and a subsidized system designed to provide universal access to primary health care

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by 2000. Today the Executive is making progress with the enabling legislation for this Law, and institutional arrangements have been made for furnishing advice and support to the departments and municipalities in the certification procedures for the decentralized and independent handling of resource transfers.

* Another important step forward was taken with the promulgation of Law 63 of 1993 on decentralization, which provided, amongst other things, for the transfer of health and education resources from the State to the municipalities. In addition, CONPES has been taking important decisions on various aspects of social security, particularly with respect to subsidy funds, amounts and beneficiaries.

* The Ministry of Health and the National Office for Equality for Women have created a sectoral working group to draw up a plan of action to ensure that a culture of equality is introduced and institutionalized in all the Ministry's activities.

* Colombia is making considerable efforts to help women, especially working women, with the care of their children and is developing innovative strategies for this purpose. The following programmes have been drawn up for this purpose:

* Maternal and child care (Ministry of Health, Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), Social Support Network). This programme promotes the enrolment of pregnant and breastfeeding women and their children aged under 12 months in the subsidized system of basic health care and provides equipment for the first-level hospitals. At present a third of the women in the target group and the hospitals have been covered.

* Families, women and children (ICBF). This programme is aimed at pregnant and breastfeeding women in the poorest groups and their children aged under 12 months. In 1994 it reached 373,000 persons.

* Mother and child nutrition (ICBF). This programme covers indigenous women and children aged under seven years living in rural areas. In 1994 it reached about 290,000 persons.

* Community welfare centres (ICBF). There are about 60,000 of these centres catering for 900,000 children.

* Awareness-raising and training for civil servants. ICBF is carrying out this work with a group of civil servants from the Family Unit and the regional offices, with a view to initiating the mainstreaming of equality for women in this institution.

The health sector is encountering difficulties of various kinds:

* The process of decentralization has proved difficult in practice, both because of the stiff requirements imposed by the central administration for confirming the independence of a municipality or department and because of local technical deficiencies.

* The application of Law 100/93 is encountering great difficulties at the local level, especially with respect to the change of outlook and approach which a municipality must make in response to a mandate to provide universal cover of services and in response to the introduction of private services under various schemes. This resistance to decentralization does nothing to improve the health indicators.

* There are significant differences in the levels of development and managerial capacity of the institutions providing health services in the municipalities and big towns, as well as in the qualifications of their personnel and in the institutional response to the people's demands. This situation affects the specific care required by women and the cover provided by the less developed municipalities.

* The structure of the health system, based on a contributory scheme and a subsidized scheme, tends to discriminate against women: where the contributory scheme is concerned, the reality is that there are more women working in the sectors which do not have social security; in the case of the subsidized scheme, women are the most seriously affected by national and local fiscal problems and by the consequent cuts in social investment.

* The last 10 years have seen a gradual deterioration of the country's vital statistics, because the institutions are not provided with any clear definition as to responsibility for collecting such statistics and because there are problems both in the information systems and in the extent of their cover.

* Improvement of the poor quality of health service personnel and enhancement of a human approach, especially in areas relating specifically to women, remain an unattained target for the sector, despite the awareness-raising and training efforts which have been made.

Employment

Urban women: women have made some significant progress with respect to urban employment; they have joined the tertiary services sector, participate in the globalization of the economy, and have overcome many problems of inequality vis-à-vis men. However, the circumstances which channel women toward the jobs and branches of activity of lower socio-economic status, lowest incomes and least job security still persist.

Against this background, the following points summarize the situation of urban women:

* The processes of economic adjustment manifest themselves in a decline in the number of women workers in the economically active population and the employed population. Some of the employment gains of earlier years have thus been lost.

* Gender stereotypes persist in employment by branch of activity.

* Most women are employed in the services sector, with a representation of 57.5 percent.

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* The proportion of women employed in low-status jobs such as unpaid worker or domestic servant is over 50 per cent and rising.

* There has been an increase in the number of women classified as own-account workers. This category is of course the main component of the informal sector. There is a corresponding decline in the proportion of women classified as independent worker/employee, positions of relative stability. In fact, although the informal urban sector underwent a decline in 1992, it is currently taking in very large numbers of women workers.

* More women than men are taking the new jobs, but there has been no improvement in the quality of the jobs obtained.

* Women constitute the lowest-paid group and the tendency for women to belong to this group is increasing.

* The proportion of women in the economically inactive population remains constant at about 70 per cent.

* Employed women are showing significant improvements in their standard of education, but these improvements are not matched by gains in terms of employment. For example, women with secondary and higher education obtain lower-paid jobs than men with the same qualifications.

* As a result of the employment situation there was an increase in poverty as measured by the real purchasing power of incomes, although poverty measured by unsatisfied basic needs declined.

* Colombia is making progress with legislation in favour of women workers, but an additional effort is required by the State to publicize the regulations among women and employers and to establish machinery to monitor and control the application of the regulations.

* The wide gap between the legislation and the social practice is illustrated by the difficulties encountered by pregnant workers, in the limited access of women to better-paid jobs and in the salary differentials which persist between women and men.

* The national employment policies do not allow any discrimination against women, but nor do they set targets for the integration of women or for facilitating their work by taking into account the requirements of their reproductive functions. Employment programmes for women focus basically on women heads of household and their cover is limited.

* Cultural factors rooted in the division of labour by sex continue to impose a double day's work on women workers.

Rural women: rural women are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis rural men and urban women; they are among the country's poorest people; they bear heavy work burdens and receive low pay; they work long days; they have poor qualifications; they suffer more problems of unemployment; and they are one of the most vulnerable social groups in the situation of agrarian crisis, violence and armed conflict in Colombia. In short, their quality of life is

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very poor.

The following factors must be mentioned with respect to their employment situation and incomes:

* There is an increasing trend towards waged employment, particularly in services and commerce.

* The 1994 figures show a higher level unemployment for women (11.37%) than for men (3.23%).

* The proportion of workers holding second jobs is much bigger for women (79.45%) than for men (20.6%).

* In rural areas virtually all domestic work is done by women.

* Women make a big contribution to the survival of the nuclear family, for in addition to their biological-reproduction and social functions they hold paid jobs.

Social policy for rural women has secured some fundamental advances in recent years:

* The theme of equality for women has begun to establish itself formally in the Ministry of Agriculture and the sector's other bodies. In fact, there exists today an institutional base which can be consolidated but which requires support if it is to play a decisive role in matters of equality.

* There is a broader political consensus that rural women are a group requiring special attention, and this consensus has led to the approval of specific policies and laws which mention women as direct beneficiaries. However, the cover is still very limited in terms of services and access to resources.

* There is a greater awareness in institutions of the need to devise instruments and machinery for incorporating women. Unfortunately, the development and use of such instruments and machinery are very slow owing to a bureaucratic culture which does not look kindly on the interests of women.

* Greater coordination with a view to strengthening the rural family has been established with bodies such as ICBF.

* The Rural Women's Office of the Ministry of Agriculture has drawn up a plan of action for rural women, as well as other specific programmes for women heads of household and women displaced by the violence and armed conflict.

The difficulties of the social programmes for women include:

* The fact that the programmes have a greater impact on raising awareness of women's problems and the organization of women than on their productive capacity and economic advancement.

* The instability of the lead institution in the agricultural sector and the

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unpredictability of the resources for the implementation of policies for the integration of women in the labour market.

* The still-limited cover of the services and programmes in relation to the numbers of poor and vulnerable people.

* The lack of information broken down by sex in the national data base and the sectoral information systems.

* The constraints associated with the prevailing social and cultural factors and the ignorance of women's rights, which influence not only rural society but also civil servants. As a result, women do not truly have information about their rights or about the sectoral plans and programmes.

* The limited cover and possibly the lack of suitable training methods mean that civil servants do not know how to incorporate equality for women in their daily work.

Training for work: the National Training Service (SENA) has made progress in the discussion and integration of this topic in various ways: documentation of the situation in the Service; a awareness-raising and training plan for civil servants, head teachers and students at the national and regional levels, a programme to promote the participation of women in non-traditional areas; and the production of materials.

The environment

The Ministry of the Environment created its project on equality and participation of women with a view to promoting a strategy for mainstreaming the topic in its activities.

To this end the Ministry made a diagnosis of the situation in terms of the awareness of its personnel about the participation of women in the management, use and benefits of environmental resources. On the basis of this diagnosis a proposal was agreed at the national and regional levels for the incorporation of the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM) in the National Environmental System, including the design of a communication strategy to promote gender equality in environmental projects and in the production of the guideline materials used in these projects.

National planning

Since 1994 the National Planning Department (DNP) has had an adviser responsible for reviewing the theme of gender equality in the analysis, approval and monitoring of the development projects and policies presented by the Department, for which it acts as lead agency. Before the submission of the National Development Plan 1990-1994 to the Congress, DNP issued recommendations for the explicit integration of women's needs. These needs were in the end included, in a piecemeal manner.

In 1995 awareness-raising and training programmes were introduced for senior DNP staff with a view to incorporating the gender dimension in the planning procedures.

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DNP does important work in documenting the national situation as part of its function of drafting public policies. Thanks to this work, the ample information about sectors such as health, small enterprises, education and employment gives a picture of the specific situation of women. However, DNP still does not have a policy for dealing systematically and independently with women's issues.

Justice and human rights

Colombia lives in an atmosphere of widespread conflict which makes it one of the most violent countries in the world. As a result, women are victims of various forms of violence and violation of their rights, and their situation is tending to deteriorate further, for women not only suffer sexual violence and violence in the family but are also denied justice, and women prisoners are subject to greater restrictions than men with regard to the access allowed to their cells and visits by their husbands.

Various institutions are working in a number of areas:

* The Government signed the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights and the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), committing itself to respect and promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women.

* The National Office for Equality, the Ministry of Justice, the Ombudsman's Office (Defensoría del Pueblo) and the Presidential Council for Human Rights (CPDH) have played an active role in the Congress in the discussion and adoption of legislation punishing violence in the family (Law 294 of 1996) and of the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Law 248 of 1996).

* The Congress has enacted laws protecting the rights of ethnic minorities.

* The Ombudsman's Office, the Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría) and ICBF have carried out studies of the prostitution of women, particularly minors, and are promoting specific programmes for them.

* The Constitutional Court has established important precedents for the protection of the human rights of women, especially with respect to conjugal and other domestic violence.

* CPDH and the Ministry of Education have established a university chair of democracy and human rights. In collaboration with other institutions CPDH has held 600 local workshops to impart information about the Constitution and provide training in democracy and conflict resolution.

Respect for the human rights of women is becoming part of a broader human rights policy in Colombia, which is experiencing serious and enormous difficulties in attaining its targets in a country in which all possible fronts are open for violation of human rights by guerrilla fighters, paramilitaries, the army, drug traffickers, and common criminals. As if that was not enough, the family constitutes another theatre of violence against women, but this type of violation of women's human rights is not even recognized as such.

Mass communication media

Stereotypes persist in Columbia; they have an impact on the poor participation of women in the management and control of the mass media and reinforce the sexist content of the messages. Since 1990 the Women's Unit in the Office of the President of the Republic has been analysing the media, promoting meetings and workshops for discussion and awareness-raising about the media's role in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes, and publishing studies on this topic. Other bodies such as the Ministry of Communications and the Colombian Radio and Television Institute (INRAVISION) are making some timid efforts to secure changes in this direction.

In 1996 the National Office for Equality for Women, in collaboration with FEMPRESS, held a meeting to debate the topic "Let's talk about non-sexist communication", at which participants made a number of key contributions to exposing the lack of a culture of equality in the mass media.

Politics and public affairs

There has been little change in the situation of women in this area during the 1990s. Against the background of the country's high abstention rate, many women do actually vote, but only a very small number of women are elected. In the last two presidential elections 30 of the candidates were women but only one of them obtained more than one per cent of the vote.

In 1994 the representation of women declined in the Senate and increased slightly in the Chamber. Their representation increased significantly in the regional bodies, although without exceeding 11 per cent of elective posts. In the civil service, three women ministers have been appointed to the Cabinet. In the civil service list, only 19 per cent of the administrative posts are held by women. Furthermore, there are virtually no women magistrates in the courts: no posts in the Supreme Court of Justice or the Constitutional Court and four of the 26 seats in the Council of State.

No local decision-making body, community action board, trade union or cooperative has more than 10 per cent women among its management staff. The national offices of the political parties have had one or two women (out of eight to 10 officials), and the statutes of one of the parties provides for one woman for every five senior officials in its regional and municipal offices. Neither the Government, nor the courts, nor the political parties have on their agenda affirmative action to increase the participation of women. An attempt to give effect to article 40 of the Constitution concerning adequate and equitable representation in the civil service was shelved in the Congress. Only the isolated voices of a few women members of the Congress and of women's organizations give the problem any airing.

THE ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN

Colombia has many women's groups, associations, networks of organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many of them are working on a broad front and have played an important role in the changes which have taken place in the country with respect to regulations, institutions and programmes. Some of the organizations, of women or otherwise, are independent; others, promoted by the State, have acquired differing degrees of independence over time.

The diversity of their objectives means that they engage in very different types of work and achieve different results:

* The organizations and groups promoting research into and discussion of the situation and status of women are engaged in a far-reaching process of theoretical and practical documentation resulting in the publication of many books and papers; some groups have succeeded in consolidating their work by setting themselves up as research centres in the universities or establishing specialized postgraduate programmes. This is the case, for example, of the master's degree in gender and development of the National University of Columbia.

* NGOS such as Casa de la Mujer, PROMUJER and Cinemujer and many regional centres do important work in the promotion of women and/or provision of services which make good to some extent the deficiencies in the State's provision, even though they receive no, or only very intermittent, support from the State.

* There are many organizations and groups seeking to satisfy basic needs or generate incomes, but they have great difficulty in surviving owing to the restrictions on access to loans, technology and technical assistance.

* The organizations and groups concerned with meeting social needs have achieved important successes in projects on the care of children (community mothers), public housing and public services (FEDEVIVIENDA), and income generation (Foundation for Higher Education, Restrepo Barco Foundation, and Social Foundation).

* The organizations and groups promoting women's organizations as such have made progress in the rural sectors (ANMUCIC) and in the formation of federations of organizations, for example the National Women's Network and the National Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

The participation of women's organizations in the determination and monitoring of policies and programmes is still scant and merely formal, even though by law women must be represented on the national, departmental and municipal planning councils, and by decree on the Advisory Commission on Equality and Participation of Women. The National Office for Equality is proposing as one of its policies to promote the organization of women and strengthen the existing groups and machinery for their participation in political and civic life.

INSTITUTIONS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The various bodies created for this purpose have been carrying out strategies connected with the determination of their own organic structure,

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orientation and operation and with the programmes of the National Office for Equality for Women.

Since 1994 in particular the national machinery for the advancement of women (initially the Women and Gender Department and then the National Office for Equality and its advisory bodies) have made progress on the following fronts:

* Start-up of the various agencies forming part of the national machinery for the advancement of women: the Advisory Commission, and the sectoral, local and parliamentary networks of thematic working groups.

* Establishment of working groups in conjunction with the agencies, which have given priority to the drafting of action plans.

* Technical and financial support for studies on the situation of women in various sectors: education, health, justice, human rights, civil safety, employment and working conditions, environment, integration of women in the country's competitiveness strategies, and participation of women in the national civil service.

* Publication of studies, documents and the results of experiments.

* Support for draft legislation produced by the Government and by the Congress, especially legislation on violence against women, political participation, informal associations, regulation of property, reproductive health, and protection of women workers.

* Preparations for Colombia's participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women: regional activities for the production of Colombia's national report, preparation of the official delegation to the Conference and participation as members thereof, organization of meetings and workshops, and publication and distribution of materials on Colombia's international commitments.

* Promotion of and participation in the publicizing of the rights of women, raising awareness of the topic of equality in the communication media, and production and transmission of audiovisual materials.

* Support for the local network of women's offices in the 22 departments and 10 main cities, by means of:

    - Meetings and/or workshops for the analysis of the EPAM policy, the achievements and difficulties of its application, and problems and needs of these offices.

    - Advice on the restructuring of the offices so that they will be able themselves to provide advice on the introduction of the EPAM policy in the departmental and municipal agencies responsible for the implementation of the sectoral programmes.

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APPLICATION OF THE ARTICLES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

ACTION TAKEN BY THE STATE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

(arts. 1, 2 and 3)

Article 1

"For the purposes of the present Convention, the term 'discrimination against women' shall mean distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

Article 2

"States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women."

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Article 3

> "States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men."

THE COLOMBIAN CONSTITUTION AND WOMEN

The 1991 Constitution is a broad and ambitious charter of the rights of the individual which recognizes the inalienable primacy of the individual, rejects any kind of discrimination, and affirms the rights of the family as the basic institution of society (art. 5).

Where fundamental rights are concerned, the concept of equality (art. 13) is perhaps one of the biggest advances in the new Constitution, for the Constitution does not merely embody the formal equality of all persons before the law and the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, national or family origin, language, religion, or political or philosophical opinions, but also establishes true equality, i.e. equality of treatment and protection by the authorities. In addition, the Constitution enjoins the State to promote the conditions for true and effective equality, to take action to help groups suffering marginalization or discrimination, and to provide special protection for persons in situations of obvious economic, physical or mental disadvantage.

Political rights, which are regarded as fundamental in the Constitution (art. 40), are posited as equal rights for all citizens, with a specific reference to the obligation of the authorities to guarantee adequate and effective participation of women at all decision-making levels in the civil service.

Furthermore, where social, economic and cultural rights are concerned, the Constitution pays particular attention to women: it stipulates the principle of equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, expressly prohibits any kind of discrimination against women, deals specifically with the situation of pregnant women, including their right to receive special protection and assistance from the State and a maintenance grant when they are unemployed or unprotected and, lastly, enjoins the State to provide specific support for women heads of household (art. 43).

The Constitution establishes the rights of the family, including the freedom of men and women to establish natural families by means of de facto marriages or legal families by means of marriage, and it bases family relations on the equality of rights and duties of the couple and on the respect of family members for each other (art. 42).

Lastly, the Constitution enjoins the Legislature to issue labour regulations paying particular attention, as a minimum fundamental principle, to the special protection of women and motherhood (art. 53).

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The Constitution and the Convention

Accordingly, the Colombian Constitution constitutes the legal basis for application of the Convention, not only by embodying rights which prohibit discrimination against women and enhance their status in various areas of Colombian life but also by attaching importance to the international human rights treaties ratified by Columbia: such treaties take precedence in domestic legislation and constitute a criterion for the interpretation of the Bill of Rights (art. 93).

Thus, as an international treaty promoting women's right to equality the Convention, which was ratified by Law 51 of 1981, takes precedence in the juridical order. When a conflict of laws arises the Convention is given priority and it functions as the most important criterion for interpretation of the rights embodied in the Constitution.

According to the majority view of the present Constitutional Court, since the Convention is a treaty ratified before the entry into force of the new Constitution, the principles of international law require that the Convention should be observed and applied without any discussion as to its content. And according to the minority view, since the Convention is a multilateral human rights treaty, in that it promotes women's right to equality and prohibits discrimination against them, its rules take precedence in the domestic order.

Accordingly, both views of the Constitutional Court support the preeminence and precedence of the Convention.

CONSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Actions of tutela

One of the most important constitutional mechanisms for the protection and effective exercise of rights is the recourse of *tutela* (art. 86), by means of which any person can seek before the courts the immediate protection of his or her fundamental rights when they are harmed or threatened by an act or omission of the authorities.

Although it is a requirement for bringing such an action that the person affected has no other means of legal protection, its use is allowed as a temporary recourse to avoid irremediable harm. The judge must issue an order requiring the authority in question to act or refrain from acting.

The following are the practical advantages of *tutela* for the protection of fundamental rights:

* Proceedings may be brought by any person, including children, without a lawyer or other legal intermediary.

* The procedure is brief and is given priority, for the judge has a maximum period of 10 days in which to take a decision.

* The decision must be complied with within the following 48 hours, and the

judge can sanction a failure to comply by arrest and fines on the ground of contempt of court, without prejudice to any criminal liability.

* Decisions can be appealed before the higher courts, and the Constitutional Court may review them.

In exceptional cases actions of tutela can be brought against individuals in the circumstances specified in Decree 2591 of 1991 on the recourse of tutela. In some such cases women, or any other persons, may defend their rights against private education institutions on the ground that education is a public service, or against enterprises or other individuals when the plaintiff is a subordinate or defenceless.

This means of recourse has become in practice the main instrument for the protection of fundamental rights; it has proved its effectiveness and people turn to it because of the flexibility of the procedure; it has helped to generate a social awareness of such rights. It is important to acknowledge the role which the Constitutional Court has come to play in the protection and promotion of rights and in the creation of a culture of respect for rights among judges, other authorities and society at large.

In concrete terms, with respect to the right to equality and in the battle against discrimination tutela is a fundamental legal recourse which women are learning to use to defend their rights, as will be seen in the discussion of the subsequent articles of the Convention.

The findings of a national study on the use of tutela in the period 1991-1993 provide eloquent testimony: during this period 22,658 actions were brought, 6,514 (28.8%) of them by women. The five rights most frequently cited as violated were the rights of petition, education and employment, and due process, and the rights to life and equality. Of all the actions brought, 5,299 were successful. Of this number, 1,894 were brought in protection of the fundamental rights of women.[1]

The Ombudsman

The 1991 Constitution created the institution of Ombudsman (Defensor del Pueblo): his general function is to attend to the promotion, exercise and publicizing of human rights. His specific tasks include submission of draft legislation, appearing before the Constitutional Court in connection with human rights legislation, and bringing actions of common cause and tutela.

The Ombudsman's Office has a unit for the rights of children, women and the elderly, which advises the Ombudsman and his regional and sectoral offices, as well as working to raise awareness and improve motivation and support in institutions in which problems connected with the situation of these groups have been identified. It also coordinates research and formulates recommendations.

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[1] Office of the Vice-President of the Republic, Council for Institutional Development. El Libro Blanco de la Tutela, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

With respect to the rights of women and the fight against discrimination against women, the Ombudsman's Office plays an active role by appearing before the Constitutional Court to seek the review of decisions on actions of tutela with a view to the protection of women's rights and by publicizing such rights at seminars and in publications.

LEGISLATION GIVING EFFECT TO THE CONSTITUTION

The proclamation of the Constitution set in motion the enactment of legislation to give effect to its provisions. This legislation facilitates the application of the Convention in the following specific areas:

* Regulation of the termination by divorce of the civil effects of religious marriages (Law 25 of 1992).

* Regulation of the acquisition, renunciation, loss and recovery of Colombian nationality (Law 43 of 1993).

* Regulation of voluntary military service by women and compulsory service when exceptional circumstances affecting the country so require and the Government so decides (Law 48 of 1993).

* Support for women heads of household (Law 82 of 1993).

* Creation of the social security system by Law 100 of 1993, which stipulates the principle of the universality of health care and social security without any kind of discrimination and the principle of support for vulnerable groups.

* Establishment of the pension support fund for women running small businesses, community mothers and women workers in the urban and rural informal sector (Law 100 of 1993, art. 25).

There is another series of laws which carry a social impact and may potentially benefit women and promote their advancement, although these laws do not envisage any specific regulations or measures in favour of women:

* Establishment of the principle of respect for equality as a purpose of education (Law 115 of 1994).

* Restructuring of the National Training Service (SENA) in order to expand its objectives and functions and modify its internal structure so as to facilitate the decentralization of its services (Law 119 of 1994).

* Establishment of the principle of the democratization, without discrimination, of sports, recreation and leisure activities (Law 181 of 1995).

* Establishment of the protection of young people, children and the family and respect for the values of equality (Law 182 of 1995 on television services).

It must be pointed out that Colombian legislation is generally designed to secure respect for and promotion of equality between men and women.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Since 1990 Colombia has had a governmental office for women in the Office of the President of the Republic; this office has operated under various administrative arrangements and titles: Council for Youth, Women and the Family; Secretariat for Women's and Gender Affairs; and Department of Equality for Women.

The Government which entered office in 1994 decided to expand the institutional base for dealing with matters of equality for women, for which various national, local and sectoral agencies had been created. In 1994 it established the Advisory Commission on Equality and Participation of Women (Decree 2055 of 1994), the Secretariat for Women's and Gender Affairs in the Office of the President, and the Gender Affairs Unit of the responsible minister. The latter two bodies operated as technical units of the Advisory Commission. These arrangements lasted until the end of 1995, when the National Office for Equality for Women came into being.

As mentioned in the introduction, the present institutional arrangements include:

* The National Advisory Commission on Equality and Participation, headed by a minister or other official and including the Director of the National Office for Equality for Women and representatives of the National Planning Department, the Presidential Council for Social Policy, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, and civil society, together with members appointed by the President of the Republic and experts on the topic, as well as two representatives of women's organizations with two deputies. The Commission advises the President and the National Office.

* The purpose of the National Office is to help to strengthen the State as guarantor of women's rights, promote the mainstreaming of policies for women in programme execution agencies, provide the technical advice required by this process, and encourage activities to facilitate a cultural change in institutions and in society, in order to render the practical application of equality increasingly more visible.

The National Office for Equality for Women

Law 188 of 1995 on the National Development Plan 1994-1998 created the National Office for Equality for Women as a special administrative unit in the Administrative Department of the Office of the President; it has administrative independence and its own resources and its purpose is to promote policies of equality for women and, in a broader framework, to develop tolerant attitudes in society at large and to contribute as part of its specific mandate to the strengthening of the State as guarantor of the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of women.

The establishment of the National Office marked a qualitative advance towards attainment of equality, since for the first time Colombia now has an institution created by law for the permanent planning, monitoring and coordination of the activities of the various agencies working for the equality and participation of women. Its objective is to carry out the policy determined by the National Economic and Social Policy Council (CONPES) with a view to promoting the equality of women in the various areas of social life and including this new cultural perspective in State policies.

In accordance with Decree 1440 of 1996, giving effect to the legislation creating the National Office, the Office's fundamental purpose is to promote and provide technical support and advice for the coordination and discussion, design, programming, monitoring and permanent development of the activities of the national and local agencies carrying out the equality policies.

To this end the National Office has focused its work on the formal incorporation of equality for women in the country's agenda for social economic, political and cultural development. This work is based on an approach to equality and equity which seeks to integrate the specific needs of women in macro-policies and secure recognition of the social, cultural and economic differences between men and women and acceptance of the sexual division of labour both from the practical and from the cultural and symbolic standpoints.

Other women's agencies

At the national level

* The Office of the Attorney General (Procuraduría General de la Nación) has a minors' and family unit whose main function is to protect the rights of minors, the disabled and the family in general (Law 201 of 1995).

* The Ombudsman's Office has a unit on the rights of children, women and the elderly.

* Some ministries have shown a special interest in working on topics connected with the equality of women, albeit through women's offices, as in the case of the Ministry of Agriculture, or by appointing staff members to take a particular interest in this topic, as in the case of the Ministries of Employment, Economic Development and Education.

At the regional level

* Since 1990 institutions have been developing at the local level; this has entailed a commitment by governors and mayors to give special attention to women's and gender problems within their administrative structure. At present there are 32 women's agencies in departments and municipalities with differing levels of legal, technical and administrative development.

POLICIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Since 1990, when the process of institutionalizing women's and gender issues began in Colombia, the treatment of these issues has depended on ad hoc social circumstances and the political will of Governments. The decisive factors which have helped to consolidate this process include the claims successfully pursued as a result of the work of women's organizations, the guidance and support provided by international technical cooperation, and the juridical, constitutional and legal developments in Colombia itself.

Colombia has made important progress in the integration of women in socio-economic life and public affairs as part of the modernization of policies and institutions and the effort to attain the national targets of social equality. There is no doubt that women have benefitted from these developments, while at the same time taking on new tasks and responsibilities which are not always matched by access to resources and services. The removal of the barriers to the full participation of women has been the objective of the institutions working for their advancement since 1990.

To this end, policies, programmes and mechanisms have been designed in the light of various theoretical and programmatic concepts and differing views about the ways in which macro-policies should operate and at the same time respond to the specific requirements of equality for women. Progress has been made in the formulation of public policies, which are slowly being translated into action for the attainment of equality.

Over a period of seven years there has been a transition from a demographic concept (women as a group subject to specific actions) to a concept of public policies which give priority to affirmative action for women; institutional arrangements which supported ad hoc initiatives have been abandoned in favour of a transversal approach which promotes and supports the integration of the topics of equality for women in sectoral policies and programmes.

The development of broader concepts of social policy which respond to the specific needs of women and men has created major difficulties and resistance in Colombia, for it implies recognizing that marginalization and discrimination are not problems affecting women alone but stem from the failure to secure equitable development, and that the set of social modernization instruments which is being promoted (decentralization, demand subsidies, social investment funds, and privatization of services) can have adverse results for women and must be revised from that standpoint.

During the period 1990-1997 successive Governments have made commendable efforts to place the issues of equality for women on the public policy agenda. In 1992 the National Economic and Social Policy Council (CONPES) approved the Integrated Policy for Colombian Women: it was the first time that this top-level body had concerned itself with a national policy for women.

Also in 1992 the Ministry of Health created the policy "Health for women, women for health", whose purpose was to help to reduce the existing inequalities between men and women in the area of health and improve women's quality of life by tackling their specific health problems. What was needed was an instrument to strengthen action for women in this specific system by means of the participation of women as subjects of the decisions which affect their lives, their bodies and their sexuality. The policy was divided into several subprogrammes: promotion of women's health and personal care; reproductive health and sexuality; prevention of abuse and care for the victims of violence; and promotion of mental health care and prevention of

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mental illness among women. At present this programme has ceased to deal specifically with women and is being carried out by the municipalities with the support of the Ministry as part of the decentralized health system.

In 1984 CONPES had approved a sectoral policy for rural women which was revised in 1994. In 1994 the new Government submitted to CONPES for approval the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM), which is currently being carried out and directs the revision of policies for women from the standpoint of a model of equitable development.

Objectives of EPAM

* To secure an institutional commitment to the incorporation of the concept of equality for women in the planning and management of development programmes and projects carried out by public agencies.

* To improve women's quality of life by removing obstacles which place them at a disadvantage with respect to opportunities and the resources and benefits of economic and social development.

* To seek the equitable participation of women in State management and decision-making bodies and in social organizations.

* To promote a cultural change which will revalue the role of women in society and encourage the building of relationships of equality between men and women, both in the family and in the other areas of society.

Strategies for application of EPAM

* To institutionalize the topic and the new cultural outlook which it implies at the national and local levels by creating agencies responsible for managing the policies and by appointing sectoral agents.

* To establish the concept of equality for women at the sectoral level by integrating it in the planning and management of the corresponding programmes in order to provide an effective response to the needs of women and men.

* To establish the topic at the local level in order to promote the implementation of the policy in departments and municipalities.

* To support the development of legislation on equality between men and women and the advancement of women.

* To help to strengthen the organization of women in order to promote their participation and training and encourage affirmative action for women in the life of the country.

* To increase the awareness of society and the authorities by means of training and through the communication media.

* To research and document the situation of women in the strategic areas of their advancement.

Progress in the establishment of EPAM

Up to December 1995 the EPAM Advisory Commission concerned itself basically with the following matters:

* Definition of the priority governmental programmes with a view to the mainstreaming of equality for women.

* Study of the proposed regulations governing the National Office for Equality for Women and make recommendations concerning its legal status, functions and structure.

* Proposal of machinery for coordination and negotiation with sectoral bodies.

Since January 1996 the Commission has been operating as a top-level adviser to the National Office.

With respect to the fulfilment of international commitments, the Minister responsible for EPAM:

* Directed the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and Colombia's participation in the preparatory meetings; she acted as head of the official delegation and together with its members analyzed the draft Platform for Action and prepared the document which Colombia submitted to the Conference: "Colombia pays its social debt to its women: national report of the Government of Colombia". She later submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a report on Colombia's participation in the Conference.

The Sectoral Network met in 1995 in order to:

* Prepare an "institutional map" of women's issues, which included a breakdown of the civil service list by grade and sex and subsequently served as the basis for the study on the participation of women in the national civil service, published in 1995.

* Report on the progress made in the establishment of EPAM and formulate proposals for streamlining the process.

The National Office has given priority in the sectoral incorporation of EPAM to the introduction of procedures to increase the awareness and improve the training of civil servants and to promote research in the Ministries of Education and the Environment and in the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, the National Planning Department, the Social Support Network and the National Training Service (SENA), which are making efforts to integrate the concept of equality for women in their activities and the work of their staff.

The Ministry of Education has carried out the following research work to document gender problems in education:

* Analysis of the results of the examinations in State secondary schools from the gender perspective.

* Gender factors in sex education.

* Sex content of textbooks.

* Plan for equality of opportunities for women in education.

At the same time training activities have been carried out at the national level for the Ministry's personnel in order to encourage the establishment of EPAM and secure greater attention for equality for women in the education sector, and advice was provided to the Deputy Minister for Youth about training workshops on integration of the gender variable in the National Sex Education Project.

At the departmental level a training strategy for teachers designed to stimulate discussion and thinking about the topic of education and gender was designed, implemented and evaluated.

The Ministry of the Environment created a project on equality and participation of women, developing a strategy of diagnosis and awareness-raising by means of regional workshops on the situation and participation of women in the management and control of and access to the benefits of the exploitation and use of natural resources and the environment. The resulting diagnoses constituted the starting point for the national and regional negotiation of a proposal for the incorporation of EPAM in the National Environmental System. This included the design of a communication strategy to promote equality for women in environmental projects.

In order to provide guidance for the process of establishing EPAM, the Ministry produced the following documents, amongst others:

> "Proposed guidelines on equal participation of women in sustainable development";
>
> "Networking, gender and equality, a means of creating culture";
>
> "Project on the development of strategies for the establishment of EPAM in national environmental policy";
>
> "Women: gender and equality: policy for participation and equality in sustainable human development".

The Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) also carried out awareness-raising and training activities with a group of staff members of its Family Unit, thus initiating the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in this agency. With a view to consolidating the gender perspective, a document on EPAM was published and distributed to the national and regional agencies. In addition, an awareness-raising strategy was formulated for the staff of the regional ICBF offices, and a handbook containing information to facilitate a revision of the materials produced by ICBF was issued, with the result that the non-sexist depiction of men and women is becoming increasingly common.

In the National Planning Department an adviser responsible for the topic of gender equality analyzes, approves and monitors the development projects and policies presented and led by the Department. In 1995 awareness and training activities were begun for its senior staff with a view to integrating the dimension of equality for women in its planning procedures. Through the Department, research has been carried out on the situation of women in health, small businesses, education and employment sectors.

Lastly, SENA produced a plan to increase awareness about the analysis of gender issues and equality for women for civil servants and trainees at the national and regional levels, together with a training plan for teachers and civil servants responsible for establishing EPAM in the SENA. Encouragement was also given to the participation of women in training programmes traditionally regarded as existing for men, and the following documents were prepared in order to provide guidance for the establishment of EPAM:

"Promotion of the participation of women in technical and vocational training";

"Towards gender equality: institutional diagnosis".

In 1995 the National Network of Women's Agencies met in order to:

* Learn about EPAM and lay the foundations for formulating a local strategy for its establishment.

* Analyze the achievements and the difficulties faced by staff responsible for establishing EPAM in the various agencies, so as to determine the various kinds of support which these agencies need from the National Office for Equality.

Where the establishment of EPAM in local agencies is concerned, in 1995 activities were carried out in 22 departments, nine departmental chief towns and the District of Santa Fe de Bogotá.

Progress has been made at two levels in the establishment of EPAM in the departments and municipalities:

More advanced regions. As of today there are seven departments and five municipalities in which the administrations have units responsible for EPAM and for action plans, including studies and projects on equality for women in the various public sectors; they have achieved some progress in the systematization of information broken down by sex;

Less advanced regions. In 23 departments and in the Capital District of Santa Fe de Bogotá discussion meetings have been held with the governors and mayors, and programmes are being carried out for groups of women with specific needs, but there are no nominated agencies or an action plan for the establishment of EPAM.

At present the National Office is restructuring its relationship with the local women's offices so that they will be able to carry out advisory, coordination and technical support functions for the departmental and municipal units responsible for carrying out EPAM, in order to make EPAM into a transversal policy permanently incorporated in all the institutions.

The Parliamentary Network has carried out a number of activities, including a parliamentary forum, which studied the commitments made by the Government at various international summits and conferences.

One of the National Office's priorities in 1996 was to establish the Network on a formal basis and prepare a programme of work to support the development of legislation and regulations on the equality of women.

PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN

The National Office for Equality for Women has carried on the work done by earlier presidential units responsible for promoting women's and gender issues. In this context it provided the necessary support for the finalization of a number of pilot programmes and their permanent establishment in the agencies concerned; after evaluating the programmes it accepted the ones whose continuation or expansion was regarded as necessary. It has defined the focus of its activities and formulated a programme of work for the performance of its functions as the agency responsible for research and dissemination and for discussion and negotiation with other bodies and with civil society.

Between August 1994 and December 1995 the national agency at the time, the Secretariat for Women's and Gender Affairs, was active in the following areas:

Diagnosis of the situation of women

* It analyzed the gender perspective in the National Development Plan: the Social Leap Forward in the sectors of education, health, justice, human rights, civil safety and employment, with a view to incorporating the topic transversally in each sector.

* It produced thematic documents to provide the bases of the equal opportunities plan for females in the following areas: environment and gender, employment and working conditions, competitiveness, education, legislation and justice, poverty, rural women, health for women, and violence against women.

* It made studies of the situation of women with respect to their participation in the national civil service and the communication media, and their situation as victims of violence.

Legal protection activities

* It promoted two fundamental pieces of legislation until they were approved: the law protecting women against domestic violence, and the law on Colombia's accession to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women.

* It scrutinized draft legislation on its passage through the Congress on such issues as the political participation of women, reproductive health,

regulation of de facto marriages, and re-employment of working women following pregnancy or periods of breastfeeding.

* It promoted until its approval the bill preventing the alienation of a family's home against the wishes of one of the spouses or permanent cohabitants.

* It held seminars and issued publications on the human rights of women.

Institution-building

* It attended the periodic meetings of the EPAM Advisory Commission.

* It promoted joint activities with the gender unit of the Minister responsible for EPAM.

* It participated in the preparatory meetings for the Fourth World Conference on Women and in the preparation of the relevant documents.

* It coordinated the production of the "institutional map" with the Sectoral Network.

* It supported activities of the Parliamentary Network such as the forum held in August 1995 and the discussion of the legislative agenda for women.

* It set up sectoral consultation groups.

When the National Office for Equality for Women was established in January 1996 as part of the institutional machinery for the advancement of women in Colombia, it took as its point of departure the analysis of the development model and Colombia's current political and cultural organization, and gave first priority to education, health, employment, justice, and rural development policies. In each of these areas it has promoted:

- Management of the policies, plans and programmes for the gradual incorporation of equality for women. To translate the will of the State into concrete commitments to equality for women is one of the most important activities of the National Office. To this end it concentrates on the public agencies, undertaking promotion, negotiation and coordination and providing assistance and technical support to enable these agencies to formulate, plan, execute and evaluate sectoral and local policies designed to consolidate equality as a basic assumption of democracy.

- Recognition of women's rights both in new legislation and in State plans and programmes. In this task, derived from the mandates of the 1991 Constitution, decisive importance is attached to publicizing women's absolute equality of rights, and to the adoption in conjunction with the relevant institutions of flexible machinery for protecting and promoting these rights as essential preconditions for women's full exercise of their citizenship.

- Management of policies and programmes to help to eliminate violence against women. The total about-face required in Colombia with regard to acts of violence means that the very concept of violence against women and the many forms which it takes must be redefined as a matter of urgency. In order to provide a more comprehensive and accurate picture of this phenomenon, the National Office is supporting the development of theoretical and methodological frameworks which reflect the realities faced every day by Colombian women in this respect and reveal the routine functioning of everyday life. In addition, the National Office is committed to expanding and adapting the services for the victims of violence and encouraging the machinery for putting an end to impunity. This work is being done in the conviction that it is not merely a part of the population which is affected but that the quality of life of all Colombian men and women is impaired when women suffer violence without society intervening to prevent it.

- Equitable representation of women in the taking of political and social decisions. This commitment of the National Office with regard to people who from time immemorial have been denied access to public affairs means that the Government has begun to strengthen the machinery by means of which women can not only vote but also be elected to representative office and participate in decision-making, the planning and execution of public policies, and the exercise of political power.

Access to resources, goods and services, and in general to better living conditions, as well as the training which strengthens independence, the empowerment of women by means of their active organization, and the exercise of their leadership in civil and other institutions are equally vital aspects of the quantitative and qualitative change in the participation of women in political and civic affairs.

These priorities were converted into the National Office's action policies. Significant progress was made in this area between January and September 1996:

Management of policies, plans and programmes for the gradual incorporation of equality for women

The National Office:

* Held workshops in nine of the local agencies responsible for establishing EPAM and incorporating the gender perspective in planning.

* Drew up six action plans for the local establishment of EPAM in Boyacá, Sucre, Cesar, Guaviare, Tolima and Córdoba. The plans for Quindio, Bolivar and Cartagena are being finalized.

* Revised 20 local development plans: Antioquia, Córdoba, Quindio, Bolivar, Meta, Sucre, Cauca, Amazonas, Risaralda, Atlántico, Nariño, Santander, Guaviare, San Andrés, Magdalena, Vaupés, Tolima, Valle del Cauca, Caquetá and Santa Fe de Bogotá, in order to promote the gender perspective in these plans.

* Participated in the following events: preparatory workshops for the fourth CORPES forum on the Atlántico department coast; workshop seminar on "Training for community activists and leaders in the department of Caldas"; workshop seminar on "Public policies for women and national and international

commitments"; workshop on "Ratification of the project on rural and indigenous women in the department of Casanare"; "First forum on the organization and participation of Atlántico coast women" at the meeting of Commission IV of the Chamber of Representatives of Quibdó; workshop on "Participation of women in manufacturing industry" and "Establishment of the inter-institutional committee for the women's office in Valledupar".

* It held four workshops to train trainers, at which a total of 61 professionals from four of the country's regions (17 departments) received training in policies of equality for women.

* Held a seminar workshop on awareness-raising for personnel of the justice system with the participation of international jurists and of magistrates and judges from 10 of the country's regions.

* Formulated, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund, an information and communication strategy designed to enhance the awareness of the national, regional and municipal authorities.

* Held two national meetings of women's offices.

* Furnished technical advice to the Rural Investment Cofinacing Fund with a view to the incorporation of the gender perspective in its planning, programming and management systems.

The National Office also contributed to or achieved progress with respect to the following agreements:

* Agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of Economic Development.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of the Interior (Women's Community Network).

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (programme for displaced women).

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of Agriculture.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of the Environment.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Cundinamarca regional social security office.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of Labour.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Higher School of Public Administration (training of civil servants in the gender perspective).

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Civil Registry.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women and the Ministry of Economic Development, the National Federation of Public Housing Organizations (FEDEVIVIENDA) and the Women and Habitat Network.

* Draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women, the Lara Bonilla School and the Ministry of Justice.

* Preparation of a draft agreement between the National Office for Equality for Women, the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Civil Registry designed to promote the registration of women.

Women's rights

The National Office has carried out the following activities:

* Implementation of the development programme for families headed by women (National Office, Restrepo Barco Foundation and Foundation for Higher Education (FES), which has reached 9,500 women heads of household throughout the country and granted loans totalling 4,769,500,000 pesos. The programme is currently operating in 23 departmental chief towns and in the town of Barrancabermeja.

* Five regional forums attended by 350 persons from bodies such as the National Urban Housing Institute (INURBE), ICBF, law firms, savings and loan associations, and women's offices. These forums emphasized the publicizing of Law 082 of 1993 on women heads of household and Law 258 of 1996 on allocation of family housing.

Political and civic participation

The National Office:

* Held the first national meeting of women's groups and organizations, which was attended by 70 of their representatives and representatives of NGOs.

* Organized the Andean Subregional Forum, which formulated the follow-up arrangements for the Beijing Platform for Action. The Forum was attended by 40 invited representatives of women's organizations and NGOs from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

* Formulated a policy of support for parliamentary initiatives and women's groups, with a view to furnishing technical advice on the drafting of legislation on women. An advisory unit is currently being established to strengthen and improve the proposal for affirmative action to secure equitable political participation of women. In addition, Germany provided technical support for strengthening the institutional management of women's

groups and organizations.

Violence against women

In this area the National Office has carried out the following activities:

* Distribution to women's groups of the text of Law 294 of July 1996.

* Creation of an inter-institutional committee to formulate strategies for the elimination of trafficking in women, with the participation of the National Office, ICBF, the Ministry of Justice, INTERPOL, the Administrative Department of Security (DAS), the Office of the Attorney General, the Ombudsman's Office, and the Advisory Commission on Human Rights.

* Commemoration of International Mental Health Day with a forum on violence against women organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Pan-American Health Organization.

Other activities carried out in various regions

The National Office has carried out a number of measures in the departments:

* In Nariño it strengthened the consultative group known as the Departmental Council of Women of Nariño (CODEMU) and established EPAM in the municipalities.

* In Guajira it created the Guajira Women's Centre and publicized the gender perspective by means of play activities at dance and theatre workshops.

* In Magdalena it trained rural women heads of household in the municipalities of Piñón, Plato and Banco.

* In Cesar it made a socio-economic study of women heads of household.

* Periodic visits to regional women's offices, organizations and groups to follow up departmental or municipal plans in Cali, Medellín, Villavicencio, Rionegro, Condoto-Istmina, Suan, Valledupar, Armenia, Fusagasugá, Montería, Ibagué, Cartagena, Sincelejo, and San José del Guaviare.

The sectoral activities for women are summarized in the corresponding section on each sector and in the part of the report on article 13 of the Convention.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

The legal order

Colombia has made significant progress with regard to the institutionalization of the issues of equality for women, in accordance with the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other international commitments.

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Obviously, the creation of the National Office for Equality for Women as a top-level State agency and the approval by the Government and the Congress of a policy for the advancement of women as part of the National Development Plan demonstrate the Government's determination to promote equality for women in all areas of the country's life.

Despite the progress which Colombia has made with respect to legislation on equality and equity, there remain cultural obstacles to the comprehensive development and effective application of the law, and large gaps persist in the establishment and operation of machinery for monitoring and controlling the application of the law. Furthermore, in practice there are operational difficulties in the State itself which impede the development of the procedures for the advancement of women. Although they have been mentioned earlier, it is worth reiterating such difficulties as the macroeconomic decisions which limit public expenditure, the still-embryonic incorporation of the notion of equality in the institutional culture, the merely advisory and non-executive status of the National Office, which means that it can only make proposals and is dependent on the will of ministries and other agencies, and the shortage of resources, which impedes the mainstreaming of women's interests in State policies and programmes.

MEASURES AIMED AT ACHIEVING EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Article 4

> "1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.
>
> 2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory."

SPECIAL TEMPORARY MEASURES

The Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM) is a governmental policy for the promotion of equality of opportunity which is supplemented by the activities of other public authorities (the Legislature and the Judiciary).

With the exception of different pensionable retirement ages, Colombia has no special rules such as affirmative action, preferential treatment or quota systems to promote equality between men and women, although there are programmes targeted specifically on women's sectors.

The 1991 Constitution envisages the possibility of action to affirm equality for women, for it enjoins the State to establish the conditions to make such equality real and effective and to adopt measures in favour of groups suffering discrimination or marginalization.

The Constitution specifically encourages the political participation of women when it enjoins the authorities to guarantee that such participation is adequate and effective at the decision-making levels of the public administration. However, the draft legislation which the Congress had been processing in order to give effect to this constitutional rule has been shelved; this demonstrates the lack of political will to grant women the participation stipulated in the Constitution.

Where the family is concerned, the Constitution likewise establishes the obligation to provide special support for female heads of household. The Congress enacted law 82 of 1993, which defines "head of household" as the person who, regardless of his or her civil status, has permanent charge of children or incapacitated persons, either by reason of the total absence or incapacity of the spouse or permanent cohabitant or owing to a substantial shortfall of assistance from the other members of the family.

Amongst other measures designed to support female heads of household, this Law envisages machinery to facilitate the education of their children, their access to the social security system, the acquisition of housing, access to loans, and the promotion of small businesses.

Although this Law has still not been put into effect by the Executive, the National Office for Equality for Women created and is coordinating a commission charged with formulating a proposal for the enabling legislation. Pending the application of this Law, programmes are being developed to support female heads of family, but they are not systematic and do not provide broad cover (see the section of this report on article 13).

Perhaps the only regulations which can be regarded as a kind of affirmative action in Colombia are the ones contained in the social security legislation, which provide for differential treatment of men and women in respect of the age of receipt of the old-age pension (arts. 33 and 36 of Law 100 of 1993). For men the minimum age is 60 years, while for women it is only 55 years; these ages will be raised in 2014 to 62 years for men and 57 for women. The Constitutional Court judged this differentiation in favour of women workers to be justified because it is intended to correct the de facto inequality of women and offset chronic situations of injustice and social disadvantage.

SPECIAL PROTECTION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

The Constitution orders the State to provide special protection for women during pregnancy and the postpartum period and to grant them a maintenance grant if they are unemployed or unprotected. Although there is no legislation to give effect to this legal obligation, since 1993 the Constitutional Court has maintained that women have the right to claim such assistance from the competent authority, subject to proof of unemployment or lack of protection. If the assistance is not granted, a woman may bring an action of tutela to secure effective protection of this right.

Colombia has signed all the international instruments dealing with pregnant workers: the Convention, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the ILO Convention on maternity protection, which was approved by Law 129 of 1931.

Colombia's labour legislation protects pregnant women by means of: the granting of maternity leave, which was increased from eight to 12 weeks and now provides for the possibility of leave for the spouse or permanent companion to attend the birth; the approval of paid breaks of two periods of 30 minutes during the working day for breastfeeding mothers; the right of female workers who suffer a miscarriage or non-viable premature birth to paid leave of two to four weeks; and the prohibition of dismissal of pregnant women or any requirement for them to prove that they are not pregnant at the time of hiring, except in the case of high-risk activities.

The paid leave of 12 weeks granted to women for the childbirth period is also available to mothers who formally adopt a child aged under seven years. It is also available to a parent who adopts without a spouse or permanent companion. If an employer fails to fulfil the obligation to grant any of the periods of leave or rest described above, a female worker is entitled to compensation of double her remuneration for the periods not granted.

In addition, the labour legislation prohibits women from working at night in industrial enterprises, at any time in underground mines, with industrial paints, or in jobs which involve the use of white lead, lead sulphate or any product containing these substances, or in hazardous or unhealthy work in general, or in work requiring great physical effort. In specific terms, pregnant women are prohibited from doing work which requires them to lift weights, remain in a fixed position or in continuous movement, or demands good physical balance, as in the case of work on ladders, or the operation of heavy machines or machines with dangerous operating points.

However, there are no studies available in Colombia which evaluate compliance with the legislation or with the international instruments. Nor are there any commissions to monitor the domestic legislation, so that it is not possible to measure its true application.

Since 1990 there has been a prohibition on the dismissal of women workers without permission of the authorities by reason of pregnancy or breastfeeding, when the dismissal occurs during pregnancy or during the three months following childbirth. In such cases female workers are entitled to compensation equivalent to 60 days wages or salary and to payment for the 12 weeks of paid leave, if they have not taken it. This prohibition extends on the same terms to adoptive fathers and mothers.

In 1994 Bill No. 065 was submitted to the Congress; it ordered the immediate reinstatement of female workers dismissed during pregnancy or the breastfeeding period, but it was shelved, demonstrating the lack of political will to ensure compliance with the legal regulations. Recently, however, in a happy decision, the Constitutional Court amended its earlier ruling and ordered that all women dismissed during pregnancy should be reinstated in their jobs.

At present actions of tutela are the only means of measuring the effectiveness of the application of the international agreements and of the labour legislation. Up to 1996 the Court had not granted protection in cases of the dismissal of pregnant women, arguing that proceedings should be brought in the labour courts. It did not take into account that the immediate requirements of the situation could not be postponed until the ordinary courts reached a decision with their usual tardiness.

Tutela has helped to correct discrimination against pregnant women in education. According to the Constitutional Court, pregnant women or single mothers cannot be expelled from or forced to leave school by reason of this personal situation. The rights to education, equality and the free development of the personality have thus been protected.

In addition, legal protection has been provided for women who have to suspend their university studies owing to health problems connected with pregnancy. According to the Court, pregnant women are entitled to have their places kept for them even when the university regulations do not allow for such an arrangement.

With regard to the fulfilment of family obligations, following actions of tutela the Court has ordered fathers-to-be to comply with their obligation to contribute to the medical costs of the birth, thus protecting unemployed pregnant women.

Lastly, with regard to the rights of pregnant women who are arrested and the rights of their minor children, it has been found on occasion that the prison authorities have not complied with the regulations concerning detention in hospital and the establishment of nurseries in prisons. The recourse of tutela has been used to ensure application of the law and provision of the care which pregnant women require during and following childbirth, as well as compliance with the obligation to establish nurseries for children aged under three years so that they can remain with their mothers in prison.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

The main advances in the application of this article of the Convention have been:

* The introduction in the 1991 Constitution of a concept of real equality and equity which provides for the establishment of special measures of care and protection specifically for groups suffering discrimination or marginalization and persons in circumstances of manifest weakness.

* The constitutional mandate guaranteeing women adequate and effective participation at the decision-making levels of the public administration.

* The constitutional mandate providing special protection for pregnant women and women heads of household.

* The constitutional developments embodied in the law protecting women heads of household and the law establishing preferential treatment for women workers in respect of the age of receipt of the old-age pension.

* The recourse of tutela, which has become an important constitutional

mechanism for providing immediate protection of the fundamental rights of women, especially pregnant women.

The difficulties in the application of this article have to do with the poorly developed legal and social culture of affirmative action. Such action is still regarded as discriminatory, because the collective consciousness is dominated by the idea of a formal equality which denies the specific differences of women and their social disadvantages. In addition, no procedures have been established for publicizing these rights in a sufficiently widespread and continuous manner, as is required by affirmative action to achieve equality.

ELIMINATION OF SEXIST STEREOTYPES

Article 5

> "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:
>
> (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;
>
> (b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases."

SEXIST STEREOTYPES IN THE FAMILY, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Stereotypes in the family

Sexist stereotypes persist in the family, manifesting themselves in the separation of roles and distribution of work. The father is the provider of the household's resources, and the mother, although she may make an economic contribution, remains solely responsible for domestic work and the daily tasks of raising children.

The stereotypes are more marked in rural families. Women are tied to the land and although they do most of the work they receive very little recognition. However, young women are exhibiting a generational change: they wish to delay childbearing and have different job expectations which prompt them to migrate to the towns. Generally speaking, domestic work is done by mothers with the help of their daughters, and in families where women do not perform paid work, the division of roles in the household is sharper. The meaning of a woman's life is still defined by the role of mother and wife.[2]

In the case of urban family life, the entry of women into the world of employment provides an economic support but can also cause conflicts owing to the perception of husbands or companions of the work performed by their wives or companions, in which stereotypes about the relations between the sexes persist.

In 1995 a study[3] was carried out to determine the true impact on society and the family of the legislation on divorce in the case of civil and religious marriages (Law 25 of 1992) on the basis of surveys of family court judges in the country's main towns. The views of the judges on the attitudes of each of the spouses to work performed by the other demonstrate the sexist conception of roles in family relations.

According to these judges, most of the men feel themselves emotionally abandoned or consider that their wives are neglecting their family obligations. This shows that they believe that women are responsible for the household and must attend to the needs of their husbands and children. It is also interesting to note the lack of trust in their wives displayed by the husbands since, again according to their judges, when their wives go out to work the husbands see this as an opportunity for unfaithfulness. Women, in contrast, regard their husband's work as an excuse for his not helping with daily household tasks.

OPINIONS OF SPOUSES ON THE OTHERS' WORK

	Men %	Women %
Not helping with household tasks	5.6	26.5
Opportunities for extramarital relations	19.4	8.8
Neglect of family obligations	27.8	5.9
Others	13.9	44.1

The survey heading "others" refers, according to the judges, to the spouses' appreciation of the others' work. Women take a positive view of their husband's work, while men regard the fact that their wife works as negative.

Stereotypes in education

Colombia has recently achieved a relative equality between males and females with respect to literacy and enroling and remaining in education. However, sexist stereotypes persist in the primary and secondary schools, manifesting themselves in differential treatment for boys and girls, in the content of curricula and in the educational texts and other materials.

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[2] Ana Rico de Alonso. "Procesos de socialización y formación de roles de género: el papel de la familia, la educación y los medios". In Catalina Turbay and Ana Rico de Alonso. Construyendo identidades: niñas, jóvenes y mujeres en Colombia. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1994.

[3] Presidential Advisory Commission on Social Policy, Secretariat for Women's and Gender Affairs. Mujer y Divorcio. Elementos para la Discusión. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

Male and female teachers have different expectations with regard to the performance and behaviour of boys and girls, some activities are divided according to sex, and some subjects are regarded as more appropriate for one sex than the other:

* Expectations of intelligence and verbal expression are generally greater for boys.

* Technical workshops are usually reserved for boys.

* Aesthetic awareness, personal care, the concept of service to others and "morals" are cultivated more among girls.

Despite the fact that most teachers are women, the senior posts in many schools are held by men.[4]

School textbooks contain many stereotyped images and representations of the sexes. A 1993 analytical study[5] on gender relations in 15 school textbooks on various subjects for the tenth and eleventh grades produced by several publishing houses illustrates this situation:

* Make-up of characters and type of participation by gender. A quantitative analysis demonstrated that only 17.7 per cent of all the characters in the texts (10,713) were women. A qualitative analysis shows that in these representations the role of men is always positive, outstanding and worthy of imitation, whereas the few appearances by women create the idea that women and their role are invisible. The male body is the one generally used to explain the functioning of the various organs, while the female body is depicted only in connection with childbirth and breastfeeding.

* Participation by gender in the private sphere. Domestic work is depicted as the business of women. In 77.7 per cent of cases women are shown doing domestic work. In contrast, only 16.7 per cent of women are shown participating in household activities traditionally regarded as "masculine" (provision of resources, management, decision-making, investments). The situation is similar with respect to the raising of children: men are depicted engaging mostly in socializing activities such as the establishment of rules and values. A qualitative analysis shows that domestic work and the raising of children are the responsibility of women, being their "natural functions". The texts reaffirm the identification with and dependence on the

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[4] Catalina Turbay. "Género, desarrollo humano, educación y socialización". In Turbay and Rico de Alonso. Op. cit.

[5] Catalina Turbay. "Los Textos Escolares y la Socialización de Género". In Educación y Cultura, Textos Escolares, un Debate Necesario. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Fecode, 1993.

activities performed by the characters in terms of their sex, as if a kind of natural distribution was operating.

* Participation by sex in the public sphere. Women are shown engaging in productive work in only 7.7 per cent of cases, while they do domestic work in 88.2 per cent. The world of productive occupations is regarded as essentially masculine except for the occupations traditionally identified as feminine: nursing, secretarial work, cooking. The political sphere is depicted as basically masculine. The same is true of the history and philosophy texts: the makers of history and the philosophers are men.

* Participation in children's games. The representation of the characters reflects a gender division based on stereotypes. Boys play out in the open and perform leadership roles in mixed groups of children; girls remain indoors and play passive roles.

* Features of personality, interests, attitudes and aptitudes. Men are depicted by stereotyped images of the masculine character (independence, aggressiveness, authority, reliability, conversational skills, etc.), while women exhibit these characteristics in only 13 per cent of cases. The same is true of the stereotypes of female characteristics (dependence, subordination, uncertainty, intuition, emotiveness, etc.). The two traditional views of the sexes create an exclusive dichotomy of personality which prevents persons from conceiving of themselves as integrated beings with feminine and masculine characteristics.

Stereotypes in employment

The attitude persists that there are areas of employment suited exclusively to men. A military career has traditionally been considered as typically masculine, since war has always been assumed to be "the business of men" even though it affects women as well. According to the available information, in 1993 the armed forces as a whole had 150,000 active members, of whom only 2,530 (1.7%) were women: 281 officers, 779 non-commissioned officers and 1,470 police officers. The military forces had 621 women members (488 in the Army, 83 in the Air Force and 50 in the Navy), while the national police had 1,909 women members.

The women officers in the military forces are career professionals (lawyers, doctors, nurses, architects, psychologists, social communicators, economists, business administrators, engineers and bacteriologists), but their work is usually limited to the services area and they belong to the administrative and logistics corps. They are not used as combatants or leaders of troops. They can be promoted only as high as the rank of colonel because the higher ranks require courses in counter-guerrilla tactics and command of troops, which women cannot take. In contrast, in the National Police women follow the same career and have the same responsibilities as men, for it is assumed that they can work closer to the community; in theory

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Presidential Advisory Commission on Social Policy, Secretariat for Women's and Gender Affairs. Mujer y Conflicto Armado. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

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there is no limit to the promotion of women, and they can rise to the rank of general.

This discrimination against women in the armed forces was rejected by the Constitutional Court. In 1995 it upheld the right to equality of opportunity of a woman who wanted to pursue an officer's career in the Marines against the refusal of the only school in the country offering the relevant training to allow her to take the courses on the ground that she was a woman.

Generally speaking, women's work is not valued as highly as men's; women are relegated to work in the informal sector with the accompanying disadvantages with respect to access to resources, loans, etc. (see the sections of this report on articles 11 and 13 of the Convention).

Sexual harassment

The sexual harassment of women at work is a real but invisible problem in Colombia. There are no studies on which to base an evaluation of the dimension of the problem or ways of combatting it. Draft legislation on the topic was submitted to the Congress in 1994 but shelved.

In education, article 125 of the General Education Law punishes for the first time in Colombia the sexual harassment of pupils by teachers. This Law regards such sexual harassment as misconduct on the part of the teacher, who may be temporarily suspended without pay during the disciplinary procedures. Teachers found guilty are struck off the rolls, in accordance with the statutes of the teaching profession. However, there is no research on which an evaluation of this problem in the education sector or the practical impact of the legislation can be based.

WOMEN IN THE MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA

The sexist stereotypes persist in Colombia's communication media, manifesting themselves both in the kind of media work done by women and in the content of the messages which are put out.

Participation of women in the communication media

A 1994 study on the situation of women in the mass communication media shows that although the numbers of women have increased, there are still very few of them holding senior posts:[7]

Newspapers

According to a 1994 survey of 14 newspapers, the participation of women was increasing, except in senior posts. In fact, there were only three women editors, and there were always fewer women section-editors than men, except for the social page, where 88 per cent of the editors were women, as befits an area traditionally regarded as "feminine". Women accounted for 30 per cent of the journalists and held 21 per cent of the technical posts (designers, artists, photographers and language editors).

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[7] Patricia Alvear. Las Mujeres y la Comunicación. Perfil Aproximado de la Situación en Columbia. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Cine Mujer, 1994.

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It is remarkable that the newspaper with the biggest national circulation did not have a single woman among its permanent columnists.

Magazines

According to a survey of seven national magazines, there were two women editors and two women subeditors. Women accounted for 41 per cent of the journalists. They were more numerous in production posts, accounting for 55.5 per cent.

Television

A survey of 24 programming companies revealed a large number of women in managerial (45%) and journalistic (45.5%) posts, but only five per cent of technical posts were held by women (camera operator, lighting technician, stage manager, editor, sound engineer). Some of the production jobs such as make-up, wardrobe, sound effects, and production assistant were mostly held by women.

Radio

According to a survey of 27 radio stations, the participation of women is extremely low in all posts in comparison with the other media. Only four women (14%) hold managerial posts and there are only two women newsroom heads (9%). Where journalists are concerned, the proportion of women rises to 23 per cent. Very few women hold technical posts (3.5%).

The image of women in the media

The presence of women in the mass communication media is no guarantee that the content of the messages will promote equality for women, for what is usually reflected in practice is the stereotyped view of the sexes which predominates in society. As a general rule, the image of women transmitted by the mass communication media helps to encourage sexism, since it reinforces the traditional concept of women's role in private life.

Men are depicted performing public functions and in sporting, executive and cultural roles, while women are relegated to the family, to the roles of housekeeper, wife or daughter. They are also depicted as sex objects to be seduced and used. These stereotypes are also found in advertising messages. However, it must be acknowledged that some people, the creators of television series for example, are making exceptional efforts to introduce non-traditional images of the sexes in the media.

Activities connected with the role of the communication media

Since 1988 the Ministry of Communications has been carrying out a women, children and communication programme designed to generate a new culture supportive of Colombia's children, women and young people by developing information and education communication procedures which reinforce the protection of the rights and welfare of these population groups. This programme is currently operating in two areas:

* The media. The aim is to use different parts of the national, regional and local media to transmit messages to the mass of the population, as well as particular or direct messages on the rights of children and women, and to promote activities for their comprehensive development.

* Education. The aim is to develop educational procedures and advisory and research services to support the sectors working with these population groups.

In 1996 the National Office for Equality for Women, with the collaboration of the women's NGOs, held a forum entitled "Let's talk about non-sexist communication", which dealt with a number of fundamental matters:

* The media continue to use underlying bipolar categories in their articles and programmes on the female and male roles, such as the private/public categories in reference to the gender division of labour and the separation of roles, or intuition/emotion and reason/abstraction to indicate different gender psychologies.

* Although fairly large numbers of women work in the media, it is not known what role women journalists play in the building of the images of non-stereotyped reality which help to create a culture of equality for women.

* In order to establish a non-sexist ethic in the mass communication media, it would be advisable to impose a constant practice of analysing the representation in the media of the different realities and secure a consensus on reevaluation of the roles of female and male journalists in the formation of a social imagery.

* Women are still depicted in advertising as sex objects or servants.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Domestic and sexual violence

Article 42 of the Constitution states that any form of violence in the family destroys harmony and unity, and it stipulates that it shall be punished by law. In addition, in 1994 Colombia signed the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, ratifying it by Law 248 of 1995. In implementation of the constitutional mandate (art. 42, para. 5) the Congress enacted Law 294 of 1996 on sexual abuse and violence in the family. This law characterizes as crimes the various ways in which violence is inflicted, establishes procedures and measures of protection and assistance for the victims of abuse, and invests the Colombian Family Welfare Institute with responsibility for policies, plans and programmes to prevent and eradicate this kind of violence.

Among the measures contained in the Law special attention must be drawn, in view of their impact in favour of women, to those providing judges with the means of protecting women, ordering the aggressor to move out of the home which he shares with the victim, and characterizing sexual violence between spouses as a crime. However, it is regrettable that the Law establishes a less severe penalty for sexual violence between spouses (six months to two years imprisonment) in comparison with the penalties provided in the Criminal Code for the crimes of sexual intercourse with violence (two to eight years imprisonment) and other sexual acts with violence (one to three years).

The problem of domestic violence is not new in Colombia, but it was not until the 1980s that it began to be discussed and studied, although the investigative aspect still needs to be expanded and strengthened.

Historically, the roots of this violence lie in the authoritarian patriarchal structure which has determined family relations, with the result that men, as the providers of the family income, hold power over the women, who sometimes find themselves in situations of subordination and inferiority.

The modernization of society and the entry of women into the world of employment have helped to alter the traditional concept of the family, causing an imbalance in the traditional structure and new conflicts in the relations between couples which unleash violence, against women and children in particular.

A 1995 demography and health survey investigated domestic violence and found a high level of abuse of women and children. Of the married or cohabiting women surveyed, 52 per cent had been abused by their husbands, more than half insulted, and more than a third beaten. These figures are similar to the ones obtained in the 1990 survey.

The women who had been insulted (33%) indicated the causes as bad temper (28%), jealousy (20%) and bouts of drunkenness (17%). The women who had been beaten by their husbands (19%) also attributed this to drunkenness (33%), jealousy (28%) or outbursts of temper (11%). The lower the level of education and the greater the number of children, the greater the verbal or physical violence.

Of all the battered women, 27 per cent had reported the facts to the authorities; this figure is somewhat higher than the one found five years earlier in the 1990 survey, when only 11 per cent of the women victims of physical violence had reported it. Ten per cent visited a police station, eight per cent a family commission, and five per cent the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF).

The reasons given by the women for not reporting the domestic violence included: belief that they could solve the problem without any help (31%), fear of retaliation (22%), and belief that the husband would change (17%).

The family commissions

The family commissions were created by the Minors' Code as a special means of tackling the problem of domestic violence. They perform policing functions and are organized by the municipal councils as part of the family welfare system. They are conceived as the most appropriate means of combating this kind of violence, since they have the services of lawyers, psychologists, social workers and doctors who can give immediate attention to the victims of abuse and/or the perpetrators. They also perform functions of conciliation but only with respect to family maintenance payments.

The Presidential Council on Youth, Women and the Family of the 1990-1994 Government created a programme to promote the family commissions, which, once it came into operation, dealt with the training of personnel, including support for the provision of equipment and management and information systems. As a result, the number of commissions increased from two in 1990 to 180 in 1994 for the whole country.[8] This programme was transferred to ICBF when the 1994-1998 Government entered office, but unfortunately it has lost its initial impetus and has ceased to be implemented. At present, there is no national body supervising the family commissions.

Actions of tutela

Actions of tutela have also become an important means of defence against domestic violence and is used by women in particular. In several such cases the Constitutional Court has decided that the women and/or their children are defenceless against the men and has ordered the police authorities to take the necessary measures of protection and supervise the behaviour of the defendants, who are prohibited from committing acts of violence.

Violence due to armed conflict [9]

In recent years the female population has been a direct victim of the political violence augmented by guerrilla and paramilitary actions and by the connexion of such actions with drug trafficking; but women also suffer as indirect victims owing to the violent deaths of their husbands and companions, displacement, and the greater burdens which they have to take on in the zones of armed conflict.

The following table shows the numbers of female victims of political violence in 1989, 1991 and 1993:

FEMALE POPULATION VICTIMS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE*

	Women		Total
	No.	%	
1989	470	12.2	3 856
1991	204	6.5	3 099

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[8] Presidential Council on Social Policy. Programa Comisarías de Familia. Area de Protección y Asistencia Legal. Informe General, December 1994. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

[9] Presidential Council on Social Policy. Mujer y Conflicto Armado. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

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1993	229	7.8	2 914

* The figures for 1989 and 1991 include political violence (murders, disappearances, kidnappings, torture, wounding, detention, attacks and threats) and violence assumed to be political. The figure for 1993 includes violations of the right to life and personal integrity committed by State and non-State agents.

Displacement of women

A 1993-1994 study by the Bishopric of Colombia estimated that 341,204 of the country's 586,261 displaced adults were women, i.e. 58.2 per cent of the total. The figure for men was 245,057 - 41.8 per cent of the total.

But women are not only direct victims of the political violence. They also suffer more from its effects: it is the widows and abandoned women who suffer greatest psychological damage when they suddenly become heads of family, uprooted from their homes and living in conditions of absolute poverty.

The displacement of families as a result of the violence in Colombia is difficult to measure because people are clearly afraid of reporting the facts, and fear of retaliation is widespread. According to the latest figures of the National Statistics Department (DANE) from the 1993 census, 822,258 of the 1,023,117 Colombians who have lost a spouse are women, i.e. 80 per cent of the total. The departments of Antioquia and Valle del Cauca, which have the highest figures for violence, also have the largest numbers of widows; this fact, taken together with the evidence that more than half of these women are young, prompts the conclusion that their widowhood is due to the violence.

The impact of displacement on women can be summarized as follows:

* Most of the women become heads of household following widowhood or breakdown of the spousal relationship. The Episcopal Conference estimates that among the displaced population 24.6 per cent of households are headed by women.

* The loss of a husband or companion or of a son, in addition to forced displacement, causes severe psychological trauma.

* Displacement shifts on to women almost total responsibility for the family economy.

* Displaced women have enormous difficulty organizing their lives owing to the trauma suffered and the low standard of education of rural women, which most of them are.

* Displaced women are more vulnerable to sexual attacks and may fall more easily into prostitution owing to their lack of social, psychological and economic protection.

In order to tackle this situation the Colombian government drew up the

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National Integrated Programme for the Population Displaced by the Violence (CONPES No. 2804 of 3 September 1995), which sets out strategies for prevention (information and early-intervention systems, creation of agencies such as the regional and municipal security councils), strategies for emergency action (emergency assistance, institution-building, and community participation), and strategies for socio-economic stabilization and consolidation (agrarian reform, promotion of small businesses, health, education, housing and employment).

Although this programme is not targeted specifically on displaced women, the Rural Women's Office of the Ministry of Agriculture has drawn up a framework for action directed specifically at women as one of the strategies of this national policy. In turn, the Ministry of the Interior has submitted to the Congress a bill on measures to help to prevent forced displacement and provide care, protection and rehabilitation for the country's displaced persons.

Disappearances of women and women political prisoners

According to the Association of Relatives of Detained and Disappeared Persons (ASFADDES), about five per cent of the 549 victims of forced disappearance in 1994 were women. But the most serious effect of this form of violence is the role which women have to play as heads of household, coping with the needs of survival and becoming political subjects totally mistrustful of the State (Presidential Council on Social Policy, 1995).

According to the figures of the Political Prisoners' Support Committee, in 1994 Colombia had 600 political prisoners, including 48 women.

Women and the guerrilla forces

According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, there are some 10,830 guerrilla fighters on Colombian territory. Although the number of women insurgents is not known exactly, it is thought to have increased in recent years.

The fact that the activities of women guerrilla fighters are unlawful is no reason for leaving the discrimination which they suffer in the guerrilla forces out of consideration. Although they take part in the fighting for tactical reasons, since they create less suspicion and are repressed less severely by the authorities, they generally take no part in policy decisions and do not usually hold posts of command. their role is always secondary and consists mainly of "domestic" work.

In addition, women who are reintegrated in civilian life also encounter serious problems with respect to their gender identity and the legitimacy of their new status, for they are doubly rejected by civil society,[10] which holds their political past against them to a greater extent than against men in identical circumstances.

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[10] Ibid.

SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN

Education

A start has been made on documenting sexist stereotypes in the texts and illustrations of school books; this work has served as the basis for the publication of a handbook to instruct teachers on this topic and to secure preliminary agreements with the publishers of school books (see the section of this report on article 10 of the Convention).

Mass communication media

Studies have been made on the numbers of women holding professional and technical posts in the various media and on the male and female stereotypes which the media present. Forums on women in the media have also been held. The Ministry of Communications has a programme to promote research on women and the media and the publicizing of women's rights.

Employment

A study was made on the number of women in the armed forces and the restrictions which they encounter.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

With regard to the task of eliminating sexist stereotypes and the violence persisting in various areas of social life, Colombia has made important progress in:

* Documentation of the problems.

* Initiation of teacher-training in the sexist content of education.

* Negotiation and conclusion of preliminary agreements with publishing houses on the production of school books free of sexist content.

* Adoption of laws to prevent and punish violence against women.

* Conduct of studies to identify the situation, causes and consequences of family, sexual and political violence affecting women in particular.

* Increasing numbers of women reporting abuse by their husbands or companions to the competent authorities.

* Adoption by CONPES of a policy for persons displaced by the armed conflict, and the start-up of a support programme targeted on women heads of household in particular.

* Recourse by women to actions of tutela as a fairly effective and available means of protection against violence in the family.

The following difficulties are encountered in the efforts to eliminate sexist stereotypes:

* The deeply rooted patriarchal culture, which has traditionally placed women in a position of inferiority and subordination in relation to men.

* The widespread violence in the country, which affects women both directly and indirectly.

* The inability of the State to ensure application of the legislation punishing domestic violence, and the limited conception of the scope of possible action, which makes it difficult to tackle the problem in a comprehensive manner.

* The inadequate reach of the programmes for publicising women's rights, which makes it difficult to generate greater awareness of the problems.

* The shortage of human and financial resources preventing the proper functioning of the family commissions.

PROSTITUTION

Article 6

> "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women."

LEGISLATION

Articles 12 and 17 of the Constitution prohibit inhuman and degrading treatment, slavery, servitude and traffic in persons.

Furthermore, since it embodies the fundamental rights of children, the Constitution orders that they shall be protected against any form of abandonment, physical or mental violence, kidnapping, sale or sexual abuse, as well as against exploitation in employment or in some other economic manner or employment in hazardous work.

Prostitution is not a crime in Colombia and, unlike procurement, which is punishable by law, the regional and local authorities can regulate it.

Under the heading "Crimes against freedom and sexual decency" the Criminal Code punishes sexual intercourse and other sexual acts committed with persons aged under 14 and stipulates the aggravating circumstances (arts. 303-306). It also punishes procurement and forced prostitution and stipulates the aggravating circumstances: when the victim is a child aged under 14 if the purpose is to transport him or her abroad, or if the victim is pregnant (arts. 308-310). Lastly, it punishes trafficking in women and incitement of children and young people to prostitution (arts. 311-312).

In the international sphere, the Protocol additional to the 1949 Geneva Convention (ratified by Law 11 of 1992) concerning international armed conflicts enjoins States to respect individuals and prohibits any violation of personal dignity, particularly humiliating and degrading treatment, forced prostitution and any other violation of decency. In addition, the regulations on issue of visas and control of foreigners (Decree 666 of 1992) authorize the expulsion of foreigners if they engage in procurement.

The National Police Code (1970) and the Local Police Code (1989) regulate establishments where prostitution is carried on and authorize the temporary detention of persons obtaining profits from procurement. They also provide for the rehabilitation of persons who have fallen into prostitution through the offer of non-compulsory health care and job training.

APPROACH TO PROSTITUTION IN COLUMBIA

Historically, prostitution has been an invisible phenomenon in Colombia, tolerated and generally disregarded by the country's institutions and society at large. Up to 1993 there were no figures or studies by which the national extent of prostitution could be measured. Nor had child prostitution been investigated, even though it is a serious violation of human rights, implying the abandonment, abuse and exploitation of minors.

Even the relatively recent studies on prostitution contain only dispersed and fragmentary data about its extent in Bogotá and other towns, and they were in any event insufficient for the purposes of analysing modalities and trends or for establishing programmes of action.

Some of the studies were carried out in the 1990s by the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, on prostitution in general and on children suffering sexual exploitation in central Bogotá. The most alarming conclusion was that the number of children in this situation had doubled in three years, for the total of 1,200 minors aged between nine and 17 found in this situation in 1990 had increased to 2,959 by 1993.

The international traffic in women, closely linked with prostitution and run by organized networks, to which just as little attention had been paid in the past, is on the increase in Colombia. The Interinstitutional Committee has taken various measures to prevent and punish trafficking in women in our country.

Research and institutional and civic awareness-raising activities were initiated in 1994, together with programmes on prostitution whose results can not yet be evaluated. The Office of the Deputy Attorney General for the Protection of Children and the Family and the Ombudsman's Office made separate studies, the first with a broader geographical and programmatic scope, and the second in individual towns selected on the basis of the seriousness of the problem.

Study by the Office of the Deputy Attorney General for the Protection of Children and the Family

This study covered more than half of the country. It found that the activities of the institutions responsible for diagnosis, prevention and intervention with respect to prostitution amounted virtually to nothing, and there was a lack of interinstitutional coordination in tackling the problem. A number of religious orders and NGOs were carrying out isolated and

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inadequate activities without the cooperation of the authorities.

The Office initiated a national programme targeted specifically on the prostitution of minors: the first stage was carried out in Bogotá, the second in 18 departments, and the third, currently in operation, was designed to ensure the continuity of the programme in these places.

* In Bogotá the population engaging in prostitution was estimated to total at least 60,000. The care provided by institutions (Renacer Foundation, Hermanas Adoratrices, and the Administrative Department of Social Welfare) was also evaluated, and a proposal was submitted to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, which drew up a programme of action for child and juvenile prostitutes.

* As part of the national implementation of this programme, field visits were made to 18 departments, (Atlántico, Antioquia, Caldas, Cauca, Chocó, Guajira, Huila, Magdalena, Meta, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Quindío, Risaralda, San Andrés, Santander, Tolima and Valle), and it was proposed that the authorities and the communities should begin preventive work and make studies of the situation with a view to establishing a local model of intervention.

The general study produced the following results:

* Of all the departments studied, the ones with the largest numbers of child prostitutes are Antioquia and Santa Fe de Bogotá (22.2%), followed by Caldas, Huila, Meta, Risaralda and Tolima, which together have 44.4 per cent.

* The main reasons for taking up prostitution in urban areas are: unemployment (80%), domestic violence and lack of income (70%), and lack of training (60%). In the middle-sized towns and rural areas the main reasons are: widespread violence and unemployment (70%) and domestic violence (60%); and in the black and indigenous communities family break-up and Western cultural influences (70%) and unemployment (55%) were the main reasons.

* Confirmation was found of the existence of national and international networks trafficking in women, of importers and exporters of children and adults, and of recruiting organizations operating at the interdepartmental level.

* 95 per cent of the children and young people engaging in prostitution had been abused or came from broken homes (mother-stepfather, father-stepmother, single mothers, or no parents).

* Prostitution of boys is less common than prostitution of girls.

* The study found a large number of young adults who wanted to stop working as prostitutes but who had no viable alternatives.

* Most of the girls and young women had little information about sexual diseases, sexual protection or methods of family planning.

This study enabled the Office to confirm the need for differential treatment for every individual working as a prostitute:

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* It is difficult to rescue the more adult women from prostitution, and it is recommended that the efforts are targeted on the children by means of integrated care, interinstitutional coordination, establishment of an intervention model tailored to the needs of each region, special training for the persons operating the programme, including the minors' police, and monitoring of the migration of children in order to prevent them falling into the hands of procurers. According to the study, prostitutes regard the police as their main enemy, accusing the police of maltreatment, blackmail and abuse of power; accordingly, corrective action must be taken against the irregularities committed by some members of the police forces and they must be trained to behave so as to change the community's image of them. The study's conclusions recommend terminating the sweeps by the police which terrify the girls and make the work of other institutions more difficult.

* With regard to procurement, the study emphasized the lack of serious research on the impunity of non-organized procurement and on the impunity protecting national and international networks. In addition, it stressed the need to involve the Public Prosecutor's Office in the programmes so that it can investigate and punish the many crimes committed in connexion with prostitution.

* With regard to the clients of prostitutes, the study established the importance of improving sex education and carrying out campaigns in the mass communication media to make the people more aware of the problem and its legal consequences (corruption of minors) and health consequences (sexually transmitted diseases). In addition, it emphasized the importance of publicizing the ICBF programmes carried out by NGOs with a view to securing the people's collaboration.

* Agreements were signed by 77.8 per cent of the departments on the establishment of networks for the care of minors and prevention of their maltreatment, with the assistance of various local authorities. These networks include a subcommittee on prostitution (made up of staff members of ICBF, the health offices, the Ombudsman's and Public Prosecutor's Offices and INTERPOL, as well as prosecutors from the family courts); the effectiveness of the subcommittees depends on the interest and the coordination capacity shown by the local authorities. ICBF has initiated action programmes in seven departments.

Study by the Ombudsman's Office

This study was carried out in three main cities (Barranquilla, Leticia, Pereira) and in two areas of Bogotá in which it had been established that the problem was most serious. Although the study was limited in extent, it did produce important results for the identification and measuring of the problem and helped to prompt the competent agencies to search for comprehensive solutions:

* The sexually exploited child population numbered 488, including 445 girls and young women.

* Most of the children and young people engage in prostitution in towns away from their homes, and the women travelled to these towns initially to work in

domestic service. Most of them have little education and have not completed the secondary level; and many of them have not even completed their primary education.

- Most of these minors are in the 14 to 18 age group, although some become prostitutes as young as 10.

- The main cause which leads them into prostitution is violence in its various manifestations (47.2%): psychological (20.8%), physical (19.3%) and sexual (7.1%). The second commonest cause is family break-up (35%).

- The problems mentioned by the prostitutes included: fear of contracting sexual diseases (17.4%), violent treatment by the police (17.2%), insecurity (15.8%) and abuse by clients (15%).

- With regard to the solutions mentioned, 24.7 per cent of the prostitutes were considering the idea of earning money in some other way, 18.5 per cent wanted to study, and 10.3 per cent wanted to abandon prostitution.

The general conclusion of the Ombudsman's Office on institutional management in 1994 was that there was a lack of programmes targeted on sexually exploited children. At that time the ICBF programme was only just beginning.

Integrated programme of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute for the care of child prostitutes

This ICBF programme, aimed at prostitutes aged under 18 and implemented under agreements with a number of NGOs, is designed to introduce prevention, training, assistance and comprehensive care activities at the national level. The strategies involve:

- Establishment of institutional participation, discussion and awareness-raising.

- Training of the project managers.

- Ways of approaching young prostitutes and providing them with the following services: voluntary admission of children and young people to a shelter (emergency centre) and then to a treatment centre (to deal with other problems such as drug addiction, alcoholism and AIDS) or to permanent homes for those who decide to change their way of life. The treatment centres offer training workshops in various occupations.

This programme began in Bogotá with the creation of an inter-institutional committee consisting of ICBF, the Office's of the Deputy Attorney General and the Ombudsman, the Department of Health, the Public Prosecutor's Office, INTERPOL and the Ministry of Education.

The programme is operating in seven departments where ICBF has regional offices (North Santander, Antioquia, Cauca, Riseralda, Valle, Tolima and Cesar).

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Despite the problems encountered, such as the lack of collaboration by official bodies, the lack of interest on the part of the populace and institutions, and the social dimension of the problem, as part of its supervisory functions the Office of the Deputy Attorney General has made a preliminary evaluation of the programme, which can be summarized as follows:

- Seven capital cities have permanent agencies caring for children in various facilities: 210 in Bogota; 20 in Popayan; 20 in Cucuta; 42 in Pereira; 35 in Ibaqué; 40 in Cali; and 80 in Medellin.

- The six regional offices and the Bogotá office deal with 82 children a month nationally, and the monthly regional average is about 12 children.

- A start has been made on the identification of children and young people suffering from sexually transmitted diseases: 111 STD cases were found in Pereira, and 18 of HIV; in Bogotá 88 STD cases and 26 of HIV; in Popayan 12 with sexually transmitted diseases or HIV; and in Calle, where no cases of HIV were found, there were 25 children suffering from sexually transmitted diseases.

Programme of the Bogotá Metropolitan Police

For about a year now the Bogotá Metropolitan Police has been carrying out the "Programme for life and hope", which is designed to help prostitutes and improve their living conditions by means of training programmes. Efforts are also being made to overcome the traditional hostility between prostitutes and the police based on fear and reciprocal mistrust.

The programme tries to find alternative occupations for the prostitutes, who may attend primary and secondary education courses, study computer operation, take courses in secretarial or manual work, and attend personal-improvement meetings. The programme is conducted at the Universidad del Trabajo and currently has 2,500 students.

Study by the Ministry of Justice on international trafficking in women

According to this recent study, Colombia is one of the main centres of the Latin American operations of the international networks trafficking in women to work as prostitutes abroad. Girls aged between 9 and 17, in particular, are recruited by means of newspaper advertisements offering the possibility of marriage abroad or well-paid work, or by inviting individuals to go abroad to increase their earnings.

The study found that 55 per cent of the women come from villages, 35 per cent from medium-sized towns, and 10 per cent from the big urban centres.

At the international level this illicit trade is linked to European and eastern networks which have their centres of operation and recruitment in Brazil, Surinam, Colombia, Dominican Republic and the Antilles, with distribution centres in Spain, Greece, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. It is estimated that in the Netherlands alone there are 5,000 Colombian women forced to work as prostitutes.

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The Ministry of Justice has decided to create an interinstitutional committee on the traffic in women with a view to building an integrated strategy to combat this scourge in coordination with the participating agencies: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Public Prosecutor's Office, INTERPOL, Administrative Department of Security, Office of the Attorney General, Ombudsman's Office, ICBF, National Office for Equality for Women, and the presidential anti-kidnapping programme.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

In the fight against prostitution and trafficking in Colombian women progress has been made in:

* Conduct of diagnostic and evaluation studies at the national level.

* Formulation and implementation of interinstitutional programmes designed specifically to provide care for sexually exploited minors.

* Initiation of the process of increasing the awareness of the problem in institutions and among the public at large.

The main difficulties encountered by Colombia are:

* The lack of interest in the problem on the part of society.

* The limited cover of the current programmes.

* The lack of capacity in the labour market to provide jobs for prostitutes on terms representing an economically acceptable alternative for them.

* The lack of capacity of the State to combat the complex national and international criminal organizations engaging in procurement, and the widespread impunity resulting from this weakness.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

Article 7

> "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:
>
> (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
>
> (b) To participate in the formulation of Government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of Government;

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(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country."

POLITICAL RIGHTS

Women have the same political rights as men both under the Constitution and in law. Their right to vote and be elected to public bodies and their access to public functions and public office are protected.

In addition, the Constitution enjoins the authorities to guarantee the adequate and effective participation of women at the decision-making levels of the public administration.

Although the two bills on promoting the political participation of women have finally been shelved in the Congress, recognition must be accorded to the work and leadership constantly provided by women senators and representatives to encourage initiatives connected with women's rights. At present a new bill is under discussion; it is designed to expand affirmative action to provide genuine guarantees of political participation by women.

WOMEN IN PUBLIC ELECTIONS

According to the 1993 census, Colombia had about 9,519,000 women of voting age, equivalent to more than 50 per cent of the total population of voting age. Although the last decade has seen high rates of abstention, as high as 65 per cent on average, a large number of women do exercise their right to vote. However, the number elected is extremely low in comparison with men.

In the 1994 presidential elections the percentage of women voters increased in comparison with 1990 from 47 to 48.6 per cent. In the last two elections there have been five women among the 30 candidates but only one of them secured more than 1 per cent of the votes in 1994 (tables 7.1 and 7.2).

In the case of national public bodies, with a total of 102 seats in the Senate, eight women were elected Senator in 1991 (7.8%) and seven in 1994 (6.8%). In the case of the Chamber, which has a total of 161 seats, 11 women representatives were elected in 1991, and this figure increased in 1994 to 18 of the 163 seats. It should be noted that so far no woman has presided over either of the legislative chambers (table 7.3).

Table 7.1
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

	Candidates	Men	Women
1990	12	10	2
1994	18	15	3
(Vice-Presidential)	18	17	1

Table 7.2
VOTES CAST FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

	1990 (%)	1994 (%) (1st & 2nd rounds)
Regina Betancur de Liska	0.62	1.10
Gloria Gaitán	-	0.30
Doris de Castro	-	0.10
Claudia Rodríguez	0.56	-
Total votes	6 047 576	5 821 331

Table 7.3
WOMEN IN THE CONGRESS

	1991 (%)	1994 (%)
Senate	7.8	6.8
Chamber	6.8	11.0

In 1994 there were 251 lists for the Senate, and 22 of them were headed by women; 48 of the 628 lists for the Chamber were headed by women. At the regional level, the number of women elected as deputies to the departmental assemblies increased from 10.1 per cent in 1992 to 11.35 per cent in 1994. A similar increase was seen for the posts of governor and mayor.

Table 7.4
WOMEN ELECTED TO REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

	1992 (%)	1994 (%)
Departmental assemblies	10.1	11.35
Municipal councils	5.2	9.71
Governors	3.7	6.25
Mayors	5.5	5.87

More women are found on the local administrative boards, where citizens participate in planning, determination of investment schemes and control of public services at the local level, but they are still very few in comparison with men. In 1992, in the 20 wards making up the district of Santa Fe de Bogotá only 15.6 per cent of elected representatives were women.

WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

There are more women in the Executive than in the Legislature or Judiciary. In 1990-1994 three of the 15 ministries were headed by women, while so far in 1994-1998 four women have held ministerial portfolios.

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Table 7.5
PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS
DURING PRESIDENTIAL TERMS OF OFFICE

	1990-1994	1994-1998*
Ministers	20.0	26.7
Deputy ministers	9.8	8.7
Heads of admin. depts.	20.0	40.0

* Data up to June 1996.

In 1995, under the auspices of the minister responsible for the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM), a study was made of the civil service list by level and sex in the departments of the central public administration (ministries and their subsidiary bodies, and administrative departments).

In all these bodies the largest numbers of women were found in administrative posts, and the smallest differences in the numbers of men and women occurred in the grades of "adviser" and "professional".

Table 7.6
TOTAL CIVIL SERVICE LIST BY LEVEL AND SEX

Level	Women		Men		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Director	362	(19)	1 497	(81)	1 859
Adviser	386	(43)	512	(57)	898
Executive	1 692	(26)	4 713	(74)	6 405
Professional	7 556	(39)	11 707	(61)	19 263
Technical	5 204	(34)	10 012	(66)	15 216
Administrative	19 251	(63)	11 184	(37)	30 435
Operative	7 973	(26)	22 532	(74)	30 505
TOTAL	42 424	(41)	62 157	(59)	104 508

Source: Gender unit of the Ministry of the Environment.

Although the number of women at the director level is low (19%), there are differences between the bodies: women hold 39 per cent of the posts of director in the ministries but only 17 per cent in the subsidiary bodies and 20 per cent in the administrative departments. The ministries with most women directors are Education (67%), Employment (53%) and Health (47%), whereas the Ministries of Development and Transport have no women at this level.

WOMEN IN THE JUDICIARY

The number of women magistrates in Colombia's highest courts of justice has been really very small. No woman has been appointed to the Constitutional Court established in 1991. Nor has a woman ever been appointed to the Supreme Court of Justice throughout the hundred years or

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more of its existence; the Council of State had one woman member in 1993 and in 1997 there are four women councillors out of a total of 26. In 1993 the Higher Council of the Judiciary had only one woman member, and in 1993 three of the 13 members were women. There are more women working as auxiliary magistrates and auxiliary lawyers. In 1996, six of the 18 auxiliary magistrates in the Constitutional Court were women and 13 of the 35 auxiliary lawyers in the Council of State were women. In 1996, 124 of the 435 magistrates in the higher district courts were women, and there were 33 women magistrates, out of a total of 114, in the administrative courts.

Table 7.7
WOMEN IN THE COURTS

	1993 (%)	1996 (%)
Constitutional Court	0	0
Supreme Court of Justice	0	0
Council of State	3.8	15.4
Higher Council of the Judiciary	7.7	23.1
Higher district courts	-	28.5
Administrative courts	-	28.9

Source: Ministry of Employment, 1993.

As can be seen, the lower down the judicial hierarchy, the higher the numbers of women.

WOMEN IN TRADE-UNION ORGANIZATIONS

Colombia has a very low rate of trade-union membership. In 1993, according to the census conducted by the Ministry of Labour, there were 2,817 trade unions with 912,208 members, including 293,968 women (32.23%).

Table 7.8
TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP BY BRANCH AND SEX

	No. of unions	Members		Total
		Men	Women	
Agriculture	371	62 359	15 208	77 387
Mining	44	18 107	1 758	19 865
Industry	524	132 681	24 434	157 115
Electricity	31	18 554	4 069	22 623
Construction	86	21 282	1 717	22 999
Trade	562	43 596	20 738	64 334
Transport	279	66 387	7 837	74 224
Financial services	55	37 285	21 841	59 126
Other services	832	215 731	195 380	411 111
Others	33	2 258	1 166	3 424
Total	2 817	618 240	293 968	912 208

Source: Ministry of Employment, 1993.

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The numbers of women holding senior posts in trade unions has traditionally been low. At the second Congress of Women Workers of the United Federation of Workers (CUT), held in 1994, one of the main agenda items was the analysis of the gender perspective in trade union organizations. Attention was drawn to the discriminatory treatment of women manifested in their assignment to secondary tasks (mechanical, organizational, administrative) and the little account taken of their opinions and their managerial capacities. This situation is one of the reasons for the low female membership of trade unions, the low level of development of their management and leadership capacities, and the view of trade-union activity as a "men's business".

The difficulties experienced by women in joining and remaining in trade unions include: household duties (90%), lack of interest of their husbands or companions in the work which they do (80%), and their own lack of motivation (70%). The general problems encountered by women include: the doubling of their hours of work owing to the burden of their household tasks (90%), economic problems (80%), work problems and temporary hiring (70%), and lack of respect for their work, sexual harassment and verbal aggression (60%).

Among the successes achieved, the Congress stressed the work of the CUT Women's Department in promoting the appointment of women to managerial posts and the initiation of awareness-raising activities in trade-union organizations, which are beginning to consider the gender issue.

WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL PARTIES

It has been the tradition in Colombia to deny women participation in the management of the political parties.

According to the Liberal Party's statutes, since 1963 women have representation on its regional and municipal management boards, one woman for every five officials, and two on boards of seven members. At present only two of the eight members of the National Executive Board are women. The Conservative Party has no women in its top echelons.

WOMEN IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Women take part in the life of their communities, supporting activities and leading actions to protect the areas where they live. However, there are no studies or statistics providing any measurement of the numbers of women currently holding senior positions or the representation of women in such bodies as the community action boards, which are the local political bodies in which decisions affecting the interests and most immediate needs of the community are taken.

WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR

In 1990 Colombia had 4,374 cooperatives, 14.7 per cent of which were managed by women. All the mutual aid cooperatives are headed by women. This figure is even more interesting in view of the fact that only 1.5 per cent of the total number of cooperatives in Colombia have exclusively female membership.[11]

THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT OF WOMEN

Colombia has various women's organizations, both national and regional and local. They include organizations which are part of political movements, organizations providing services, organizations connected with trade unions, and organizations participating in popular and community movements.

At the national level there are the Women's National Network, Casa de la Mujer, Diálogo Mujer, the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANMUCIC), and the Colombian Association of Community Mothers for a Better Colombia (AMCOLOMBIA). There are also a number of other organizations established for various purposes which have incorporated women's programmes.

The Colombian Confederation of Non-Governmental Organizations (CCONG) has 22 affiliated national NGOs; its membership is made up of departmental federations, which in turn represent regional NGOs. Some of these organizations have the objective of supporting women or carrying out special programmes for them. The Confederation not only supports its affiliated organizations but has also functioned as an intermediary between the various women's civic organizations.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES AND IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Article 8

> "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations."

According to the Constitution, Colombian women may represent the Government at the international level on the same terms as men.

However, there are rather few women at the top levels of the diplomatic service: six women ambassadors out of a total of 67; six women ministers plenipotentiary out of 13; four women ministers councillors out of 20; six women councillors out of 26; 14 first secretaries out of 43; and 33 women non-honorary consuls out of 81. Thus, women hold 114 (35%) out of a total of 327 diplomatic posts; and women hold 213 (64%) out of a total of 333 administrative posts.

But it must be stressed that since 1993 Colombia has had women representatives in various international bodies: CEDAW, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the Human

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[11] Canadian Cooperative Association (ASCOOP). Participación de la Mujer en Cooperativismo Colombiano. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1992.

Rights Committee.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

The progress includes the following developments:

* The last two Governments have appointed a woman as Minister for Foreign Affairs and these women have done outstanding work.

* The participation of women in international affairs increased slightly between 1990 and 1996.

The difficulties include:

* The lack of a systematic listing, broken down by sex, of the staffing table of the foreign service or of members of delegations to international meetings and conferences; this makes it difficult to monitor the application of the Convention at the international level.

* There are no specific measures designed to increase the number of women performing international functions.

NATIONALITY

Article 9

> "1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her Stateless or force upon her the nationality of her husband.
>
> 2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children."

EQUALITY OF RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO NATIONALITY

According to the Constitution and Colombia's legislation, women have equal rights with men to acquire, renounce or retain their nationality and to transmit it to their children. Marriage to an alien or a change of nationality of one of the spouses during the marriage do not oblige the other spouse to change his or her nationality.

ACQUISITION OF NATIONALITY

Article 96 of the Convention provides, without any kind of gender discrimination, for two categories with respect to the acquisition of nationality: by birth or by adoption of the country.

By birth

Native-born Colombians who meet one of two conditions:

- That the father or mother were native-born Colombians or that, if the persons in question are children of aliens, one of the parents was domiciled in Colombia at the time of birth;

- That, if the persons in questions are children of a Colombian father or mother but were born abroad, they are subsequently domiciled in Colombia.

By adoption of the country

Three groups of persons can acquire Colombian nationality:

- Aliens who apply for and obtain a naturalization card, in accordance with the established legislation and procedures (Law 43 of 1993 and Decrees 1869 of 1994 and 2150 of 1995), which apply equally to men and women. The applicant must have been domiciled continuously in Colombia for the five years preceding the date of submission of the application. Men and women married to Colombians must have been domiciled continuously for the two years preceding the date of submission of the application.

- Native-born Latin Americans or Caribbeans domiciled continuously in Colombia during the year preceding the date of the submission of the application, in accordance with the principle of reciprocity contained in current international treaties. Absence from Colombia for a period of five months during the year does not interrupt the periods of continuous domicile.

- Members of indigenous peoples sharing frontier territories, in accordance with the principle of reciprocity contained in official treaties.

LOSS AND RECOVERY OF NATIONALITY

Men and women are treated on an equal footing with respect to the loss or recovery of nationality. Prior into the entry into force of the 1991 Constitution, Colombian nationality was lost on the acquisition of the nationality of another country.

Law 43 of 1993 develops the principle of dual nationality by establishing that if a Colombian by birth acquires another nationality he or she does not lose the civil and political rights accorded by the Constitution and the law and is not obliged to renounce the nationality which he or she holds by reason of origin. Nationals by adoption who hold a second nationality may have their access to public functions and posts restricted in accordance with the Constitution and the law.

In addition, the Constitution stipulates that no Colombian by birth may be deprived of his or her nationality, so that he or she can lose it only by renunciation, and that, even then, Colombian nationality may be recovered in accordance with the law. The renunciation of Colombian nationality is a right of both nationals by birth and nationals by adoption accorded equally to men and women. Nationals by adoption may also lose Colombian nationality if they commit crimes against the existence and security of the State and the constitutional order.

Persons who renounce Colombian nationality may have it restored only after a period of two years from the date of the act of renunciation. Nationals who lost Colombian nationality when the previous Constitution was in force by reason of their acquisition of another nationality may have Colombian nationality restored by submitting an application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a consulate or governor's office, in which they state their wish to accept the Constitution and the laws of Colombia. Nationals by adoption who lost Colombian nationality because they held two nationalities are additionally required to have established their domicile in Colombia one year before submitting the request for restoration of Colombian nationality.

TRANSMISSION OF NATIONALITY TO CHILDREN

Women and men may transmit their nationality to their children on an equal footing. Nationals by adoption may transmit their nationality to their children if they are minors by entering a statement to that effect in the relevant naturalization card or registration order. Such applications must be signed by the persons exercising parental authority, who will usually be the father and mother, and must include the name, age and sex of the children to whom Colombian nationality is being transmitted.

Persons who lost Colombian nationality before the 1991 Constitution came into force by reason of acquisition of a second nationality may, once they have recovered Colombian nationality, transmit it to their minor children born abroad so that they may also become Colombians by birth when they fulfil the requirement of domicile in the country.

According to Colombian legislation, children may obtain their own passport, which indicates the names and details of the identity documents of their parents, and they may leave the country in the company of a parent without producing any other document. Children aged under five years may also be included in the passport of their father or mother, in which case they must travel with the holder of the passport. If they travel in the company of only one of their parents they must present the death certificate of the other parent or evidence of his or her authorization when parental authority is exercised jointly.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

The Constitution and laws of Colombia grant the same rights to men and women without distinction with respect to the acquisition, loss and recovery of nationality and to the transmission of nationality to children. The most important advance with respect to the application of article 9 of the Convention was the inclusion in the 1991 Constitution of the principle of dual nationality, for this allows men and women to take another nationality without losing Colombian nationality. The related legislation also embodies the principle of equality, on which the constitutional provision is based. In Colombia, nationality is one of the areas in which there are no discriminatory practices impairing the equality of women.

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EDUCATION[12]

Article 10

> "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:
>
> (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
>
> (b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
>
> (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;
>
> (d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;
>
> (e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;
>
> (f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
>
> (g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;
>
> (h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning."

EDUCATIONAL SITUATION OF THE POPULATION

Since the 1970s Colombia has made a number of efforts to improve the educational standards of its population, in particular by expanding the cover of the formal system, especially primary education. In addition, in the 1980s several literacy campaigns were carried out and significantly reduced the illiteracy rates.

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[12] The analysis which follows, together with the original statistical tables contained therein, was produced for this report by Catalina Turbay on the basis of the sources cited in the text.

In this context the educational standards of women have been improving, although no specific policies have been formulated from the gender perspective to achieve such an improvement or greater equality for women. This progress has resulted instead from the modernization of the country as part of the plans for establishing universal access to services. The educational standards of Colombian men and women remain low in comparison with those of some other countries of the region (Argentina, Chile and Cuba, for example), but they are higher than in a number of other countries.

Over the last 20 years these standards have been rising among men in urban areas, and more so among women, (table 10.1). Less progress has been made in rural areas, no doubt owing to the neglect which they have suffered in recent decades, especially in the present one, and of the exacerbation of the conflicts persisting there. In any event, despite the relative progress made, in general terms the educational standards of women remain lower than those of men.

Table 10.1

COLOMBIA: POPULATION AGED 15 AND OVER BY EDUCATIONAL STANDARD, AREA AND SEX (HORIZONTAL PERCENTAGES), 1973-1993

Area and sex	No educ.	PRIMARY		SECONDARY		HIGHER	
		Complete	Incomp.	Complete	Incomp.	Complete	Incomp.
Total 1973	20.3	14.7	38.0	3.1	17.6	0.9	1.6
Men	19.4	14.2	38.4	3.1	17.5	1.5	2.1
Women	21.1	15.2	37.6	3.1	17.7	0.3	1.2
Chief town	12.5	19.0	31.6	4.6	25.2	1.3	2.5
Men	10.7	18.7	30.1	4.9	26.4	2.5	3.5
Women	13.9	19.2	32.8	4.3	24.2	0.4	1.7
Elsewhere	34.1	7.3	49.4	0.5	4.1	0.1	0.1
Men	32.4	7.5	50.9	0.4	4.2	0.1	0.1
Women	36.1	7.0	47.7	0.5	4.0	0.0	0.1
Total 1985	11.8	17.5	28.4	9.2	23.8	2.6	3.3
Men	11.5	17.8	28.8	8.9	22.8	3.4	3.4
Women	12.0	17.2	28.1	9.4	24.8	1.8	3.2
Chief town	7.5	18.5	21.3	11.9	29.9	3.6	4.6
Men	6.6	18.9	20.5	11.9	29.5	4.9	4.9
Women	8.2	18.1	22.0	11.8	30.3	2.5	4.3
Elsewhere	22.3	15.1	45.8	2.6	8.9	0.2	0.3
Men	21.9	15.4	46.3	2.5	8.5	0.3	0.3
Women	22.6	14.8	45.2	2.8	9.4	0.1	0.3
Total 1993	9.5	18.4	24.5	13.0	27.1	3.1	4.3
Men	9.2	19.0	24.8	12.9	26.2	3.8	4.2
Women	9.8	17.9	24.2	13.1	27.9	2.5	4.5

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Chief town	5.9	18.0	16.7	16.7	32.7	4.2	5.8
Men	5.2	18.4	15.7	17.0	32.6	5.2	5.8
Women	6.5	17.7	17.6	16.4	32.7	3.3	5.8
Elsewhere	18.7	19.5	44.4	3.7	12.7	0.4	0.6
Men	18.0	20.4	45.3	3.7	11.7	0.4	0.6
Women	19.5	18.5	43.4	3.6	13.9	0.4	0.6

Source: National Statistics Department (DANE). National Population and Housing Censuses 1973, and one per cent sample for 1985. DNP-UDS-DIOGS calculations/DIOGS BFP-calculations based on the CASEN survey, Misión Social-UDS, 1993. In DNP-UDS-DIOGS, SISD, Sistema de Indicadores Sociodemográficos para Colombia, Boletín No.10: "Género y Desarrollo".

Table 10.2, on the average number of years of education, shows that the earlier gaps in school attendance have been narrowing since the 1970s as access to formal education in Colombia has become more widespread, particularly at the primary level. However, this higher rate of school attendance by females has not been due to specific governmental initiatives for them but rather to an increased interest in promoting equality with respect to the availability (but not the quality) of education on the part the population at large, at least in the towns.

Table 10.2

COLOMBIA: AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS OF EDUCATION OF PERSONS AGED 15 AND OLDER BY AREA AND SEX, 1978-1993

Area and sex	1978	1992	1993
TOTAL	4.6	6.3	6.6
Men	4.7	6.3	6.6
Women	4.5	6.3	6.5
CHIEF TOWNS	5.7	7.4	7.6
Men	6.1	7.5	7.8
Women	5.4	7.2	7.5
ELSEWHERE	2.4	3.8	3.9
Men	2.4	3.7	3.8
Women	2.3	3.7	3.9

Source: DIOGS BFP-calculations based on DANE household surveys: stage 19 - June 1978; stage 77 - September 1992; Stage 81 - September 1993. In DNP/UDS/DIOGS. SISD, Sistema de Indicadores Sociodemográficos para Colombia, Boletín No. 10: "Género y Desarrollo".

The same development has taken place with respect to the population's literacy levels, an area in which women are the main beneficiaries since the difference in the literacy rates of men and women narrowed from 2.9 per cent in 1978 to 0.5 per cent in 1993. The involvement of women in the literacy campaigns undertaken by the central Government has made a significant contribution to this development, as has the work of NGOs in their literacy programmes for women.

One point which should be emphasized in connection with the improving literacy standards of women and their greater progress in this area in comparison with men is that women have been motivated to seek education for themselves by the higher rates of school attendance by their children.

Table 10.3 shows that illiteracy is ceasing to be determined by the influence of gender discrimination, although it does remain closely linked to poverty levels.

Table 10.3
COLOMBIA: ILLITERACY RATE BY SEX AND POVERTY LEVEL, 1978-1993

SEX AND POVERTY LEVEL	1978	1992	1993
TOTAL	16.8	9.5	8.6
Not poor	11.7	6.2	5.1
Poor	22.4	13.3	14.2
MEN	15.3	9.1	8.4
Not poor	10.9	5.8	4.9
Poor	20.2	12.8	13.9
WOMEN	18.2	10.0	8.9
Not poor	12.4	6.6	5.3
Poor	24.2	13.7	14.4

Source: DIOGS BFP-calculations on the basis of DANE household surveys: stage 19 - June 1978; stage 77 - September 1992; stage 81 - September 1993. In DNP/UDS/DIOGS. SISD, Sistema de Indicadores Sociodemográficos para Colombia, Boletín No. 10: "Género y Desarrollo".

FORMAL EDUCATION IN COLUMBIA

Colombia's formal education system consists of preschool, basic primary, basic secondary and occupational secondary, and higher education, which is divided into technical, technological and university (undergraduate and postgraduate). All these levels are regulated by the Ministry of National Education, which is also responsible for non-formal education but not for the vocational training provided by the National Training Service (SENA) under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment and by the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES), which is a decentralized body.

As a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Colombia accords its citizens the universal right to education. The same applies to women's right to education, for Colombia is also a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In addition, the

1991 Constitution establishes the inalienable right to education in the context of its prohibition of discrimination (art.13) "on the ground of sex, race, national or family origin, language, religion, political or philosophical beliefs", thus stating a commitment to guarantee that there shall be no discrimination in Columbia.

Article 67 states that education is a right of the individual and a public service having a social function; its purpose is to provide access to knowledge, science, technology and other cultural benefits and values.

The education system has to train Colombians in respect for human rights, peace and democracy, work and recreation, with a view to cultural, scientific and technological improvement and the protection of the environment.

The State, society and the family are responsible for education, which is compulsory between the ages of five and 15 and includes a minimum of one year of preschool and nine years of basic education.

Education is free in State schools, although tuition fees may be charged to those who can afford them.

The State regulates and is responsible for the supervision and control of education in order to guarantee its quality and the attainment of its purposes, and in order to provide a better spiritual, intellectual and physical training for the pupils and students; the State ensures that the cover of the education service is adequate and that children and young people are in a position to enrol and remain in the education system.

The central Government and the local agencies are responsible for the management, financing and administration of the State education services in accordance with the Constitution and the law.[13]

Preschool education

Attendance at a preschool establishment for at least one year is compulsory under the Constitution. However, progress in this area has not yet been sufficient; the introduction of the "Grade Zero" project in some areas of the country has allowed only a small group to receive preschool education. This deficiency is made good, for the poorer population groups, by the family welfare community centres and other services for the youngest children, such as the community kindergartens, which are discussed below. And for the better-off groups the deficiency is made good mainly by private kindergartens or other preschool establishments.

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[13] In order to give effect to this and related provisions of the Constitution, in 1993 the Government promulgated Law 115, the General Education Law, which provides for a reorganization of the education system and contains a set of policies to improve its quality; and in 1996 it formulated the Ten-Year Education Plan. The question of the incorporation of equality in this legislation is dealt with later in this section.

Girls suffer no discrimination at this level of education, as can be seen from the enrolment figures; indeed, their attendance at preschool establishments, both in total and by grade, is greater than that of boys, as is demonstrated by the available statistics presented in table 10.4.

Table 10.4

NATIONAL ENROLMENT RATES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION BY LEVEL AND SEX, AND PERCENTAGE ENROLMENTS BY SEX, 1993

LEVEL	ENROLMENT	% By sex
PRESCHOOL		
Total	571 981	
Boys	272 570	47.65
Girls	299 411	52.35
PRE-KINDERGARTEN		
Total	86,274	
Boys	42 975	49.81
Girls	43 299	50.19
KINDERGARTEN		
Total	168 203	
Boys	72 012	42.81
Girls	96 191	57.19
TRANSFERS		
Total	317 504	
Boys	157 583	49.63
Girls	159 921	50.37

Source: DANE tabulations, 1994.

Moreover, the preschool dropout rates do not show any disadvantage for girls with respect to the efficiency of the system; the opposite is in fact the case, for according to the latest (1991) figures of the Ministry of National Education, the total dropout rate in preschool education breaks down as follows:

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Table 10.5
DROPOUT RATES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION BY SEX, 1991

LEVEL AND SEX	ENROLMENT	DROPOUTS		
		Total	%Total	% By sex
Boys	234 886	40 041	8.85	17.05
Girls	217 369	19 339	4.28	8.90
Total	452 255	59 380	13.13	

Source: Statistics of the Ministry of National Education based on DANE tabulations.

There are no studies dealing with the quality of preschool education or the differences at this level from the perspective of equality. A preliminary study of the problem indicates that the socialization of boys and girls in kindergartens differs in accordance with stereotypes which reinforce what is expected of women and men.[14]

Lastly, with regard to preschool teaching staff, the figures show a very high prevalence of women (96.4%) and the fact that they have better educational qualifications than the men working in preschool establishments. This situation is illustrated in table 10.6.

Table 10.6
TEACHING STAFF WITH ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND PERCENTAGE PARTICIPATION AT EACH LEVEL BY SEX, 1993
(inter-group gender comparisons)

	TOTALS	MEN		WOMEN	
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		Total	%Intra	Total	%Intra
Primary	87	5	0.48	82	0.29
Baccalaureate					
Teaching baccalaureate					
Degree	6 155	208	19.46	5 947	20.85
No degree	400	33	3.09	264	1.29
Other baccalaureate					
Degree	1 901	175	16.37	1 726	6.05
No degree	284	20	1.87	264	0.93

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[14] Ana Rico. Socialización de Roles de Género. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana/UNICEF, 1991.

Technical or technological					
Teaching qualification					
Degree	6 285	79	7.39	6 206	21.76
No degree	641	18	1.68	623	2.18
Other qualification					
Degree	768	70	6.55	698	2.45
No degree	233	11	1.03	222	0.79
Vocational					
Teaching qualification					
Degree	9 823	248	23.20	9 575	33.57
No degree	1 851	84	7.86	1 767	6.20
Other vocational					
Degree	605	60	5.61	545	1.91
No degree	225	45	4.21	180	0.63
Postgraduate					
Teaching postgraduate					
Degree	207	7	0.65	200	0.70
No degree	92	6	0.56	86	0.30
Other postgraduate					
Degree	20	0	0.00	20	0.07
No degree	14	0	0.00	14	0.05
TOTAL/INTER	29 591	1 069	3.61	28 522	96.39

Source: DANE tabulations, 1994.

Basic Primary Education

This level of education includes grades 1 to 5 and is offered in two modes: the grade school or "traditional" primary school, found mainly in the towns; and the "new" school, found mainly in the rural areas. Primary is the level of education providing the broadest cover in Colombia: about 88 per cent in gross terms, and 75 per cent in net terms.[15] There is equality between boys and girls in primary education with respect to enrolment and the efficiency indicators; indeed, in some years girls take a clear lead with respect to enroling and remaining in the system. Tables 10.7 to 10.9 illustrate this situation.

The lead taken by girls over boys is more apparent in the dropout rates: since the 1970s girls have remained in the education system longer than boys.[16] Table 10.8 shows this situation in 1991: many more boy than girl dropouts.

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[15] Vélez. Op. cit., 1995.

[16] Catalina Turbay. Brechas de género identificadas en el sistema educativo formal de Colombia. Preliminary version, consultation report. Santa Fe de Bogotá, UNICEF, 1994.

Table 10.7
ENROLMENT IN BASIC PRIMARY EDUCATION BY SEX, 1981-1994

YEAR	BOYS%	GIRLS%	DIFFERENCE%
1981	47.7	52.3	+4.6
1982	48.6	51.4	+2.8
1983	49.3	50.7	+1.4
1984	49.1	50.9	+1.8
1989	50.8	49.2	-1.6
1990	50.8	49.2	-1.6
1991	47.1	52.9	+5.8
1994*	50.9	49.1	-1.8

* Rough calculations by DANE for two regions.

Source: Catalina Turbay, 1994; Ministry of National Education Statistics, 1991, and DANE tabulations, 1994.

Table 10.8
DROPOUT RATES: GRADE SCHOOL (PRIMARY) BY SEX, 1991

LEVEL AND SEX	ENROLMENT	TOTAL DROPOUTS	% DROPOUTS	% By sex
Boys	1 190 413	206 270	8.16	
Girls	1 338 702	70 889	2.80	17.33
Total	2 529 115	277 159	10.96	5.30

Source: Ministry of National Education Statistics based on DANE tabulations.

Both groups show marked differences due to sex stereotypes in the causes of dropouts.

Table 9 shows how economic reasons, particularly reasons connected with work, and expulsion from the system are commoner among boys - a reflection of the predominance of stereotypes based on the patriarchal tradition which, in this case, work to the detriment of boys' education. It is striking that the commonest reason among girls is "Did not wish to continue"; unfortunately, the type of information available does not provide any pointers to the reasons for this lack of interest in studying. One hypothesis would be that in this case as well the patriarchal culture, with its poor opinion of the worth of academic work for girls, may be influencing this "decision".

But the situation of girls is not as rosy as might be thought. Indicators of efficiency and cover are one thing, but indicators of quality are something quite different.

Table 10.9
CAUSES OF DROPOUTS FROM PRIMARY EDUCATION BY SEX IN SEVEN TOWNS, 1991

Causes	Boys	Girls
Change of residence	22.3	19.1
Need to work	2.6	0.0
No places	17.6	13.5
Very expensive	19.0	24.7
Not sent	16.8	15.5
Failure or expulsion	5.3	0.7
Did not wish to continue	4.7	11.0
Did not pass admission test	0.0	1.0
Others	11.8	14.5

Source: T. Valdés and E. Gomariz. Mujeres Latinoamericanas en Cifras. Colombia. Ministry of Social Affairs/Institute on Women/FLACSO, 1993.

According to an analysis of the factors associated with success in mathematics and language carried out as part of a national evaluation of the quality of primary education, which is generally quite poor according to studies made by the SER research institute in 1992 and 1993, sex is associated with performance, in the following cases at least:

Timetable A:

- The overall performance of boys is better than that of girls;

- There is a relationship between the sex of the pupil and performance in language and mathematics in the third and fifth grades for the total population (schools: public urban+private urban+rural);

- For third-graders in the urban public and private schools there is a positive association between a woman teacher and achievement in language and mathematics;

- In the fifth grade the sex of the pupil appears to be associated with a better performance by boys in mathematics and by girls in language.

Timetable B. It was only possible to obtain the results for the third grade, which indicate the following situation:

- Girls in all schools and in urban public schools in particular deliver a better performance in mathematics, also associated with a male teacher in urban public schools;

- The type of school (boys', girls' or coeducational) is associated with achievement in mathematics. Boys in boys' schools generally perform better in language than boys in coeducational schools;

- A female teacher makes a positive contribution to the performance of all groups in language;

- A male teacher makes a positive contribution to performance in mathematics in the general study and in the study on urban public schools.[17]

To sum up, Colombia currently has no significant gaps with respect to the cover and efficiency of its schools which would indicate discrimination against girls in primary education. In contrast, the academic achievements do seem to indicate that boys perform better than girls in mathematics and also in language in some cases; this may point to different processes of socialization in terms of the importance attributed to the academic education of girls and boys, which would lead to a poorer performance by girls. Attention must be drawn to the large percentage of women teachers on the staff of primary schools. In contrast to what was found in preschool education, these teachers are not better qualified than the male teachers. Although the women have more first degrees than the men, they are less likely to have postgraduate qualifications, and more women have only a bachelor's degree. Table 10.10 sets out Colombia's most recent statistics on this difference between male and female teachers.

Table 10.10
ACADEMIC TEACHING STAFF IN BASIC PRIMARY EDUCATION (GRADE SCHOOL)
BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION AND PERCENTAGE PARTICIPATION
AT EACH LEVEL BY SEX, 1993
(inter-group generic comparisons)

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	TOTALS	MEN		WOMEN	
		Total	%Intra (100%)	Total	%Intra (100%)
Primary	811	156	0.68	655	0.66
Baccalaureate					
Teaching bacc.					
Degree	52 372	9 149	40.30	43 180	43.28
No degree	2 798	684	3.00	2 114	2.12
Other bacc.					
Degree	7 435	2 569	11.26	4 866	4.88
No degree	1 648	404	1.77	1 244	1.25
Technical					
Teaching techn.					
Degree	6 795	784	3.44	6 011	6.03
No degree	775	117	0.51	658	0.66
Other techn.					
Degree	984	296	1.30	688	0.69
No degree	307	76	0.33	231	0.23
Vocational					
Teaching vocational					
Degree	36 149	5 885	25.80	30 264	30.34
No degree	7 845	1 517	6.65	6 328	6.34

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[17] Catalina Turbay. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

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Other vocational					
Degree	2 310	555	2.43	1 755	1.76
No degree	747	288	1.26	459	0.46
Postgraduate					
Teaching postgrad.					
Degree	1 050	186	4.76	864	0.87
No degree	446	78	0.34	368	0.37
Other postgrad.					
Degree	68	18	0.08	50	0.05
No degree	22	3	0.01	19	0.02
TOTAL/%INTER	122 562	22 808	18.61	99 754	81.39

Source: DANE tabulations, 1994.

Secondary basic and secondary vocational education

The secondary level has four grades of compulsory basic education (sixth to ninth) and two grades of secondary education (tenth and eleventh). It is offered in various modes, with the academic mode or traditional baccalaureate predominating (about 80 per cent of enrolments) over the technical or diversified modes. The main subjects in the latter modes are commerce, taken mostly by girls, and industry, taken mostly by boys. The net cover is barely 48 per cent, and this represents perhaps the main bottleneck in the country's education system at present.[10] In addition, the gap between urban and rural areas is even wider at this level of the system owing to the scant numbers of rural pupils taking the baccalaureate. This level shows a greater tendency towards female enrolment. Girls are more likely than boys to attend secondary school; they make up the majority of students in all courses and remain at school longer, as table 10.11 illustrates.

Table 10.11
ENROLMENT IN BASIC SECONDARY AND VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION BY SEX AND GRADE, 1993
(totals and percentage inter-group participation)

GRADE	TOTAL	BOYS	%BOYS	GIRLS	%GIRLS
TOTAL	2 805 123	1 322 359	47.14	1 482 764	52.86
SIXTH	709 121	349 270	49.25	359 851	50.75
SEVENTH	583 911	274 735	47.05	309 176	52.95
EIGHTH	490 131	228 939	46.71	261 192	53.29
NINTH	408 579	189 400	46.36	219 179	53.64
TENTH	340 661	156 238	45.86	184 423	54.14
ELEVENTH	272 720	123 777	45.39	148 943	56.61

Source: Based on DANE tabulations, 1994.

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[10] Velez. Op. cit., 1995.

However, the distribution of enrolment for the various non-academic subjects shows clearly that male and female stereotypes persist: it is mostly females who take the traditionally female subjects, such as the commercial, teacher's and social work baccalaureates, while males take the traditionally male subjects, such as the industrial and agricultural baccalaureates.[18] It is worth pointing out in this connection that academic achievement in the industrial subjects (predominantly male), evaluated on the basis of the State secondary examinations, is usually the highest of all the baccalaureate subjects. This means that males not only receive a vocational training which offers them a better future in the jobs market but also that they receive better-quality academic training.

With regard to the efficiency of this level of education, the figures also favour females. In recent years girls have remained longer in secondary education and have graduated in larger numbers than boys. The latest data available on dropouts, failures and passes confirm that this trend persists, as can be seen from table 10.12.

Table 10.12

INDICATORS OF EFFICIENCY (DROPOUTS, FAILURES, PASSES) IN BASIC SECONDARY AND SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BY SEX, 1993

(totals and inter- and intra-group percentages)

ACADEMIC SITUATION	TOTAL	%TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Total dropouts	218 549	7.79	119 268	99 281
% Inter			54.57%	45.43%
% Intra			9.02%	6.70%
Total failures	412 977	14.72	207 408	205 569
% Inter			50.22%	49.78%
% Intra			15.68%	13.86%
Total passes	2 173 597	77.49	995 683	1 177 914
% Inter			45.81%	54.19%
% Intra			75.30%	79.44%

Source: Based on DANE tabulations, 1994.

However, various studies on dropouts at this level indicate that there are many different causes connected with the outlook which permeates the behaviour of men and women in society. A primary source of information is provided by the data of the National Planning Department for seven main towns. According to this data, in 1992 the following were the main reasons for dropping out of secondary education:

The effect of traditional outlooks on the reasons for dropping out from school are clear in this table 10.13: for example, marriage and not being sent to school are commoner reasons for girls to drop out, while for boys the commonest reason is the need to work.

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[18] Catalina Turbay, Op. cit., 1994.

Table 10.13
REASONS FOR DROPOUT BY SEX IN SEVEN TOWNS, 1992

REASONS	BOYS	GIRLS
Change of residence	0.44	5.65
Had to work	20.57	11.34
No places	8.45	7.32
Very expensive	18.02	20.77
Was not sent	1.06	4.55
Failure or expulsion	2.72	3.70
Did not wish to continue	39.39	28.06
Did not pass admission test	1.56	4.07
Got married	0.28	5.98
Others	7.01	8.55
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: C. Turbay and others. Causas de Deserción de la Educación Secundaria y Rutas Posteriores a la Deserción según Género. Estudios de Casos en Bogotá, Medellín y Cali. Presidential Council on Youth, Women and the Family/FONADE, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1994.

A qualitative study carried out in three main towns of Colombia confirms the effect of the patriarchal culture on the reasons for dropping out. Although children of both sexes drop out mainly for reasons connected with the many problems of quality and organization of baccalaureate courses, an examination of the reasons stated (at the beginning of the interviews) and of the real reasons (established by the end of the interviews) shows clearly that the traditional outlooks underlie many of the reasons for dropping out. This is true both when the inter-group results are compared and when the separate data for each sex (intra-group) is analyzed. Tables 10.14 and 10.15 show some of the differences found.

Table 10.14
REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION.
PERCENTAGES ACCORDING TO STATEMENTS IN INTERVIEWS, BY SEX

	STATED REASONS		UNDERLYING REASONS	
REASONS	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
EDUCATIONAL	32.14	24.40	34.08	21.23
FAMILY	4.17	4.76	4.47	6.70
PARTNERS	2.38	1.79	3.35	2.23
PATRIARCHAL CULTURE	0.00	2.98	0.56	5.03
ECONOMIC	16.07	4.76	10.06	5.03
SOCIAL PROBLEMS	1.19	1.79	2.79	1.12
EMOTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT	1.79	1.19	1.12	1.68
HEALTH	0.56	0.00	[illegible]	[illegible]

Source: C. Turbay and others. Causas de Deserción...

Table 10.15

CAUSES OF DROPPING OUT FROM SECONDARY EDUCATION

(intra-group percentages by sex)

REASONS	STATED REASONS		UNDERLYING REASONS	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
EDUCATIONAL	55.10	58.57	59.80	49.35
FAMILY	7.14	11.43	7.84	15.58
PARTNERS	4.08	4.29	5.88	5.19
PATRIARCHAL CULTURE	0.00	7.14	0.98	11.69
ECONOMIC	27.55	11.43	17.66	11.69
SOCIAL PROBLEMS	2.04	4.28	4.90	2.60
EMOTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT	3.06	2.85	1.96	3.90
HEALTH	1.02	0.00	0.98	0.00

Source: C. Turbay and others. Causas de Desercion...

These tables show how economic causes and social problems (i.e. violence) play a more important role in the case of boys, while for girls family reasons and reasons connected with the discrimination which they suffer under the patriarchal culture carry more weight.

There are no studies, or none are known, on dropouts from this level of education in rural areas.

Lastly, in connection with the student population in basic secondary and vocational secondary education it is important to mention the quality of the education from the standpoints of gender and equality for women. The preliminary findings of an assessment made by the Sistema Saber de Evaluación de la Educación and the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES), which assessed the academic achievement of students of both sexes in the seventh and ninth grades of both the academic timetables, indicate a better overall performance by boys.

On the other hand, the preliminary findings of a current piece of research on the performance of boys and girls in the State secondary examinations for the academic years 1982, 1987, 1992 and 1995 show that boys generally score significantly higher marks than girls. This occurs both in the total sample and in its various subsamples. Girls tend to do proportionately better than boys in the middle range of marks and even more so in the lower range. Most boys and girls score marks in the middle range. Only in a few academic years do girls achieve higher marks than boys in language; this does not happen in every year and the difference is not very great.[28]

In addition, the results of the State examinations analyzed by type of school traditionally show that boys-only schools usually score better marks in the State secondary examinations. Table 10.16 illustrates this situation for 1993 both for the whole country and for the capital.

Table 10.16
PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS BY TYPE, 1993

School	Columbia			Santa Fe de Bogotá		
	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low
Boys %	60.9	24.7	14.4	83.0	13.6	3.4
Girls %	37.6	30.4	32.0	64.5	27.1	8.4
Co-ed %	16.8	31.8	51.4	32.6	35.4	32.0

Source: C. Turbay. Brechas....

To sum up, despite the larger numbers of girls in secondary education and the fact that they remain at school longer, serious problems of equality persist at this level, manifesting themselves both in the vocational subjects chosen by girls, when such options are available, and in their academic achievements. It must be borne in mind therefore that a strategy to promote equality for girls in secondary basic and vocational education will of necessity have to take this problem into account and deal not only with the aspects of cover and efficiency but also, and perhaps primarily, with what occurs in the socialization and academic training provided in the classroom. Day by day, these factors seem to work in favour of a poorer performance by girls.

A recent study sponsored by the Office of the President and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation on the texts used in primary and secondary education for the socialization of boys and girls showed an overwhelming presence of male and female stereotypes and the prevalence of extremely sexist language. The indicators used for the study produced the following quantitative results:

* Fewer than 20 per cent of the characters represented in the texts are female, with respect to both leading and secondary characters.

* When domestic tasks are depicted, the traditionally female activities are mostly done by females, although 57.8 per cent of them are also shown as doing traditionally male work.

* Only very occasionally is productive work by women in the public sphere depicted, and in most cases this is a prolongation of their tasks in the private sphere in terms of the type of activity. Very rarely does women's

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[28] [illegible] Análisis de los resultados de los [illegible] de research report. Santa Fe de Bogotá, DINEM, 1996.

work receive high social recognition, and women are almost never depicted in positions of power.[21]

In contrast to what was found at the lower levels, there are many more men working as teachers in secondary basic and vocational education; however, the women have slightly higher educational qualifications. Table 10.17 illustrates this situation, which is representative of a general trend in recent years.

Table 10.17
ACADEMIC TEACHING STAFF IN SECONDARY BASIC AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION AT EACH LEVEL BY SEX, 1993
(intra-group gender comparisons)

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	TOTAL	MEN		WOMEN	
		Total	%Intra	Total	%Intra
Primary	185	90	0.12	95	0.14
Baccalaureate					
Teaching					
baccalaureate	12 928	6 929	9.47	5 999	8.78
Degree	546	329	0.45	217	0.32
No degree					
Other baccalaureate					
Degree	7 749	5 299	7.25	2 450	3.58
No degree	543	274	0.37	269	0.39
Technical					
Teaching techn.					
Degree	6 240	3 365	4.60	2 875	4.21
No degree	636	335	0.46	301	0.44
Other technical					
Degree	3 968	2 418	3.31	1 550	2.27
No degree	920	491	0.67	429	0.63
Vocational					
Teaching vocational					
Degree	86 031	41 618	56.90	44 413	64.98
No degree	5 824	3 163	4.32	2 661	3.89
Other vocational					
Degree	8 411	5 001	6.84	3 410	4.99

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[21] Catalina Turbay and Julio Pérez. Hacia la producción de Textos Escolares desde una Perspectiva de Equidad en las Relaciones de Género

Youth, Women and the Family, 1993.

Postgraduate					
Teaching postgraduate					
Degree	4 646	2 218	3.03	2 428	3.55
No degree	759	311	0.43	448	0.65
Other postgraduate					
Degree	603	297	0.41	306	0.45
No degree	128	61	0.08	67	0.10
TOTAL %INTRA	141 484	73 136	51.70	68 348	48.30

Source: Based on DANE tabulations, 1994.

Higher education

Higher education includes undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the technical, technological and, predominantly, university modes. The cover of higher education is still fairly low, because only a small group of the population has access to it. Nor is the rest of the population offered the possibility of vocational training leading to other options essential for young people.

Table 10.18
EVOLUTION OF ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMPOSITION BY SEX, 1960-1994

		WOMEN		MEN	
Year	Total	Number	%	Number	%
1960	23 013	18 779	81.6	4 234	18.4
1965	44 403	34 094	76.7	10 309	23.3
1975	176 098	112 059	63.6	64 039	36.4
1980	271 630	150 515	55.4	121 115	44.6
1985	417 654	14 270	51.3	203 384	48.7
1990	487 448	236 894	48.6	250 554	51.4
1991	510 777	249 540	48.9	261 237	51.1
1992	535 320	263 483	49.2	271 837	50.8
1993	547 468	269 764	49.3	277 704	50.7
1994	576 540	277 962	48.2	298 578	51.8

Source: ICFES. Higher Education Statistics, Databank, 1991 and 1996.

The problems from the standpoint of gender and equality for women are fairly similar to the problems in secondary education. Although women are enroling in ever increasing numbers in secondary and higher education, a detailed study of the types of career which men and women tend to take up shows that gender stereotypes generated by the various sources of socialization still carry great weight in individual job options.

Statistics of the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher [illegible] this level.[22] This trend has been found only in recent years and it is increasing, as can be seen from table 10.18, which shows the evolution of enrolment by sex in the various undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

The figures for enrolments in 1994 by subject and mode (table 10.19) show how the proportions of women and men reflect a number of differences resulting from the influence of gender stereotypes on choice of career. For example, although according to the intra-group analysis boys choose careers such as engineering, architecture and related areas, or economics, administration and related areas, women opt mainly for economics, administration and related areas and for education sciences. In turn, the inter-group analysis shows a marked preponderance of men in engineering and agronomy and of women in health, education and social sciences, and fine arts, for all the modes. This influence of sexist education on choice of career is even clearer when the areas are broken down into subjects. Then the influence of stereotypes and the patriarchal culture is even greater since, for example in health sciences, where there are more women than men, an examination of careers shows that more women opt for jobs having a lower status, such as nurse or nutritionist, etc.[23]

Table 10.19
PARTICIPATION BY SEX IN ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY
GENERAL AREA AND SPECIFIC SUBJECT, 1993
(horizontal percentages)

Mode	TOTAL		TECHNICAL		TECHNO'AL		UNIVERSITY		POSTGRAD	
AREA	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
AGRONOMY	66.14	33.86	2.07	0.79	26.82	14.65	36.45	17.89	0.79	0.53
FINE ARTS	41.09	58.91	10.10	20.30	7.76	16.45	23.23	22.16		
EDUCATION	33.26	66.74	0.30	2.71	1.07	2.07	29.13	56.36	2.75	5.59
HEALTH	31.07	68.93	0.08	0.37	1.30	4.23	26.37	61.78	3.32	2.55
SOC.SCIENCE	38.75	61.25	0.55	0.49	0.79	1.06	34.57	56.70	2.84	2.99
ECONOMY & RELATED	45.38	54.62	2.35	4.07	9.35	13.01	31.33	36.09	2.33	1.45
HUMANITIES/ RELIGION	50.00	50.00	-	-	0.59	7.64	44.20	35.33	5.21	7.03
ENGINEERING	68.78	31.22	4.58	2.86	13.06	6.96	50.34	21.03	0.80	0.36
MATHEMATICS	51.37	48.63	1.24	2.95	7.90	10.65	36.59	32.36	5.63	2.68

Source: ICFES. Higher Education Statistics, Databank, 1996.

In contrast to the lower levels, the overwhelming majority of teachers in higher education are men. Table 10.20 shows how the numbers of each sex evolved between 1975 and 1985, with a slight narrowing of the gap between women and men. This is particularly true for private universities.

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[22] Elsy Bonilla. La mujer colombiana en la universidad y en el mundo

[23] Elsy Bonilla. Ibid.

Table 10.20
TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION AND SEX, 1975-1985

MODE	1975			1980			1985		
	TOTAL	M	W	TOTAL	M	W	TOTAL	M	W
TECHN'Y	1 322	73.8	26.2	1 164	83.2	16.6	3 021	69.1	30.9
INTERM. VOC.	19 821	78.2	11.9	2 601	76.6	23.4	3 460	71.4	28.6
UNIV.				26 930	80.8	19.2	36 746	77.4	22.6

Source: Based on Elsy Bonilla and Penélope Rodríguez. Fuera del Cerco. Mujeres, Estructura y Cambio Social en Colombia. Canadian International Development Agency, Bogotá, 1992.

This slightly upward trend in the numbers of women teachers in higher education has been constant. Between 1983 and 1993 the gap between the sexes narrowed by 5 per cent, and the number of women increased by about 60 per cent, for a variation of 68.8 per cent in the number of women's posts. The following table illustrates these variations.

Table 10.21
TEACHING POSTS BY SEX, 1983-1993
(inter-group percentages by sex)

		MEN		WOMEN	
YEAR	TOTAL	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
1983	40 416	31 577	78.1	8 839	21.9
1984	41 636	32 171	77.3	9 465	22.7
1985	43 227	32 999	76.3	10 228	23.7
1986	43 469	33 210	76.4	10 259	23.6
1987	44 269	33 942	76.7	10 327	23.3
1988	47 990	36 438	75.9	11 552	24.1
1989	51 725	38 659	74.7	13 066	25.3
1990	52 445	38 480	73.4	13 965	26.6
1991	54 164	40 090	74.0	14 074	26.0
1992	54 414	39 761	73.1	14 653	26.9
1993	55 796	40 879	73.3	14 917	26.7
Variations 83-93	15 380	9 302	29.5	6 078	68.8

Source: ICFES/General Planning Office. Higher Education Statistics, Colombia 1993, Annual Summary, Santa Fe de Bogotá.

TRAINING FOR WORK

Although Colombia has a broad and diversified supply of training facilities, both in terms of institutions and of quality of courses and non-formal education options, there is no national information system to provide a picture of training for work. It must be stressed that non-formal education has played a very important role in training for work, particularly for poorer women and women workers in the informal sector of the economy, although this is also true of traditional female jobs in general.

The National Training Service (SENA) of the Ministry of Employment is the institution with the broadest national cover, both urban and rural, in the provision of various kinds of job-training programme. SENA is funded by contributions from private business. Where enrolment is concerned, just as in formal education large numbers of women enrol for vocational training, in a trend which has been increasing in recent years, as can be seen from table 10.22.

Table 10.22
NUMBERS ENROLING FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING
UNDER SENA BY SEX, 1988-1994

	Numbers enroling	
	Men	Women
1988	60%	40%
1990	52%	48%
1994*	50%	50%

* Only for urban areas; in rural areas the proportion is much lower at approximately 38 per cent.

Source: Based on Luz Perla Tovar and Constanza Monsalve. Género en el SENA. Proposed work plan, progress report. Presidential Council on Social Policy/SENA, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995, and data of the SENA Evaluation and Statistics Division.

Studies carried out by the Planning Office of the SENA Evaluation and Statistics Division describe the population taking the various courses offered by SENA and show that, while 53.3 per cent of persons taking short courses are women, women account for only 38.4 per cent of the enrolment for long courses. Similarly, the data of the SENA Evaluation and Statistics Division show that women do less well than men on long courses.

In addition, an analysis of training by subject shows that in the vocational training offered by SENA there is an enrolment bias caused by gender stereotypes. Women enrol mostly for traditional "female" subjects: "...the higher numbers of women are distributed among commerce (81.5%), finance (65.3%), administration (48.3%), and services (59%), in contrast with the figure of only 5.7 per cent for women in electricity. When the numbers of women taking industrial courses (48.1%) are analyzed by specific occupation, they are distributed among the textile industry (92.8%), garment industry (54.3%) and graphic arts (38.6%), with very few women taking mechanical (5.6%) or automotive (6.3%) engineering".[24]

It may thus be stated that women opt for occupations and jobs providing them with a less promising economic future than if they opted for courses which have not traditionally been regarded as female. Accordingly, in non-formal education as well there persists a strong influence of stereotypes in attitudes as to what is appropriate for the sexes in vocational terms.

The composition of the SENA teaching staff by sex and levels of qualification discriminates against women, since they account for only 26.8 per cent, a lower proportion than in other similar institutes in Latin America.

The information on the educational qualifications of teachers has not been updated for five years. Five years ago there were the following numbers of women at various levels of education: seven (24.1%) out of 29 professionals with a master's degree or specialist training; 339 (31.7%) out of 1,069 teachers with complete university education; 209 (27.6%) out of 756 with incomplete university education; 80 (16.5%) out of 486 with complete technical or technological qualifications; 73 (19.1%) out of 383 with incomplete technical or technological qualifications; 206 (22.2%) out of 928 with complete secondary qualifications; and 111 (38.3%) out of 290 with incomplete secondary qualifications.

The most important point in this information is that the highest levels of educational qualification among teachers are complete university (27%), complete secondary (23.4%) and incomplete university (19%), and that women teachers account for 33, 20 and 20.3 per cent at these levels, compared, respectively, with the men's figures of 24, 24.6 and 18.6 per cent. This allows the conclusion that the proportion of women teachers with a high level of education is greater than that of men.[25]

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR WITH RESPECT TO EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

As stated at the outset, the progress in the situation of women in Colombia has been due more to the widespread policies of democratization and modernization, especially in education, than to specific policies designed to achieve equality for women. Although Colombia has targets for both cover and quality, the progress has been achieved more in quantity than in quality.

Where policies are concerned, in the 1990s a major effort has been made to give effect to the constitutional mandates on universal access to basic education, decentralization of education services, and participation of civil society in these processes. The work done in this area includes the enactment of Law 115 of 1993 and the formulation of the Ten-Year Education Plan 1996-2005. This plan refers specifically to the goal of eliminating all discrimination or isolation based on gender with respect to access to and remaining in the education system.

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[24] Luz Perla Tovar and Constanza Monsalve. Género en el SENA. Proposed work plan, progress report. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Presidential Council on Social Policy - SENA, 1995.

[25]. Ibid.

The participation and equality of women is one of the strategies of the National Development Plan 1994-1998. By determining national institutional arrangements for dealing with this issue and by approving the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM), the Government reinforced the arguments set out in EPAM on the importance of introducing changes which will produce education with a gender dimension, as one of the ways of achieving equality of rights and social equity.

Some other advances have been made in the situation of women in the 1990s, as the following summary shows:

* A slight decline from 9 to 8.6 per cent in the rates of male and female illiteracy in 1993, although the decline for women was slightly less than for men (8.4%).

* Continuation of the trend for larger numbers of females to enrol in the various levels of education. Girls predominate in preschool institutions (52.5% on average for the various grades in 1993 as against 50.7% in 1991). Girls account for about 50 per cent of pupils in basic primary education, although there have not been any great variations in comparison with previous years; in secondary basic and vocational education the proportion of female enrolment was 52.9 per cent in 1993 as against 49.2 per cent at the beginning of the decade; and women account for almost 52 per cent of students in higher education.

* The female dropout rates from the various levels of formal education and the number of graduates therefrom illustrate the trend of earlier years for greater efficiency in the education of girls than of boys, as measured by continuation in the system. However, the causes of dropping-out remain closely linked to sexist stereotypes which, as already pointed out, have a negative impact on both males and females.

* The tendency for larger numbers of women teachers to be found at the system's initial levels has continued, but the gap narrows through the other levels up to higher education. However, women teachers have increased their representation in higher education by about two per cent as the decade has proceeded.

* The problem of the influence of sexist stereotypes persists in vocational options.

* Attention is drawn to the progress made in the institutional efforts to introduce the analysis of gender and equality for women in education. Although it is only an initial effort, the women's unit of the Office of the President, which has been operating under various administrative arrangements since 1990, and the Ministry of National Education have been carrying out a

/...

number of measures to attain that objective.

Information on the problems of education, gender and equality for women

The following research and consultation documents on questions of gender and equality for women in education have been produced or are currently being produced under the auspices of the Gender Unit of the Minister responsible for EPAM and of the National Office for Equality for Women:

* "Analysis of the results of the State secondary school examinations from the gender perspective." This piece of research is designed to produce a comparative analysis of the performance of girls and boys in the final State secondary examination and in its various constituent papers: verbal and mathematical skills, language, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, and optional subjects. The analysis covers the results for the past 13 years.

* "Gender factors in sex education." This piece of research is concerned with the revision of the Ministry's sex education programme from the gender perspective. It includes an analysis of the content of the teaching and teacher-training programmes.

* "Systematization of information." This covers information gathered by the Women's Commission of the Teachers' Association of Bogotá during 10 years' work training teachers in the Capital District on the topic of sex discrimination in schools.

* "The gender perspective in the National Development Plan." This analysis of the education and health sectors is designed to identify the strategic areas of public policy in which action must be taken in order to achieve equality for women.

* "Plan for equality of opportunity for women in education." This consultation document is designed to identify the most important aspects of the joint work done by the Ministry and the National Office for Equality with a view to the formulation of a plan for the sector.

Institutionalization of the topic and awareness-raising

The existence of a national agency in the Office of the President for establishment of women's policies has encouraged discussion of the topics of education, gender and equality for women. Its activities, together with those of the Ministry, have led to the initiation of a process which is slow but promises to bear fruit if the Ministry shows the necessary political determination.

Since earlier times the Ministry has had a unit for dealing with this issue, but the unit has not had either the status or the logistical support commensurate with the task. However, beginning in 1994 the new institutional arrangements led to the creation, amongst other machinery, of a sectoral network for the policy of equality, with women represented at the highest levels in each ministry. The Ministry of National Education is thus able to participate in decisions on the relevant policies and a commitment is made to implement the programmes.

As part of these new institutional arrangements the Ministry appointed an official in the Office of the Deputy Minister to act as focal point and attend to coordination with the National Office and the other agencies involved in the measures designed to help to create a culture in which there really is equality of opportunity in education, with regard to both quantity and quality. The Ministry and the National Office are drawing up a plan of work for the short and medium terms.

In its programmes the Ministry has been developing arrangements for awareness-raising and training of civil servants:

* At the national level. The focus has been on the conceptualization of gender, equality and education, with a small group of officials responsible for initiating the creation of a team to promote the consolidation of the policy of equality for women within the Ministry. At the same time a larger and more representative group is promoting the incorporation of the analysis of gender and equality for women in the Ministry's policies, programmes and projects.

* In the departmental education offices. A training strategy for teachers in three pilot departments (Antioquia, Risaralda and Santander) has been developed and evaluated with a view to opening up spaces for discussion and reflection of the topics of education and gender at the local level. This strategy includes the design and publication of a training manual entitled "Mi Mamá me Mima, Mi Papá Fuma Pipa", the compilation of teaching materials on gender and education produced in Colombia and abroad, and the design of an experimental methodology for in-service training of teachers. The following results have been achieved:

- The training of more than 500 teachers, head teachers and university teachers;

- The creation of teams to explore gender discrimination in schools;

- The compilation of information on teachers' thinking and attitudes on this subject, and the approval of the teaching materials referred to above.

* As pointed out earlier, the Ministry and the National Office, in cooperation with the Teachers' Association of Bogotá and UNICEF, are also carrying out a strategy of awareness-raising and incentives for publishers of school books in order to secure changes designed to eradicate gender stereotypes.

* The Office of the Deputy Minister responsible for youth has carried out training activities for national and local civil servants, seeking specifically to incorporate the gender component in the national sex education project. So far the Ministry has recruited an adviser on the introduction of the analysis of gender and equality for women in the eight programmes for which the Deputy Minister is responsible.

* The Ministry is consolidating its activities by introducing a programme on equality for women. For this purpose it has created an internal working

group and obtained the cooperation of UNESCO. Here the goals include:

- Expansion of access to basic education;
- Improvement of the quality of basic education in the context of continuing education and comprehensive human development on a non-sexist basis;
- Integration of the concepts and processes of non-sexist education in the formulation and implementation of the institutional education project which each education institute has to formulate.

Many different kinds of difficulty have been encountered in this sectoral work; the main ones have to do with the resistance by civil servants and teachers to changes in favour of equality for women and the concept of gender analysis and with the fact that the commitment of the Ministry's senior officials is more in words than in deeds. However, a more determined political will to incorporate these topics now exists.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT[26]

Article 11

> "1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:
>
> (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
>
> (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
>
> (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
>
> (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;
>
> (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other

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[26] The quantitative information used to describe the work done by women in urban areas is based mainly on data of the DANE national household surveys carried out in September 1993, 1994 and 1995. These surveys deal with the employment situation in seven metropolitan areas: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Manizales and Pasto.

incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f) The right to protection of health and safety in working conditions, including safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary."

This section describes the current situation of Colombian women, with emphasis on the urban labour market,[27] as a frame of reference for assessing the progress made with respect to the gender perspective and equality for women in employment. The section has been structured as follows: general description of the political and economic context in the 1990s; description of the urban employment situation; proportion of women in the total population and the population of working age; work performance of women; women and unemployment; and progress and difficulties in the employment of women.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF COLOMBIA IN THE 1990s

The approval of the new Constitution in 1991 constituted the most important political event in Colombia in the 1990s.

Together with this great legal reform, like most other Latin American countries Colombia adopted the stabilization and structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund, such as economic liberalization, legal and financial reforms, reform of the social security system, administrative reforms and privatization programme, etc.

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[27] The situation of rural women is dealt with in a later section.

The process of adopting the neoliberal model in Colombia began under the Barco administration (1986-1990), but it was not until the Government of César Gaviria (1990-1994) that the process became universal and determined.

The introduction of this model against a background of the technological backwardness of Colombia's production system and the accelerated urbanization which began in mid-century[28] have had the inevitable consequence of a sharp increase in poverty. Recent studies[29] show that in the four-year period 1990-1994 the number of people living in absolute poverty increased from 13.5 to 16 million, i.e. more than half of Colombia's population in that period. In addition, the removal of subsidies and the privatization of public services caused an increase in user costs, limiting the access to such services of large numbers of the population, including poor women.

In the economic sphere the effects of Colombia's adaptation to the new market conditions caused a sharp drop in GDP throughout the national economy. The growth rate for 1991 was barely 2 per cent, compared with 4.3 per cent in 1990 and the average of 4.6 per cent achieved in 1986-1990.

Subsequently, despite the low GDP growth caused by the stabilization policies and the decline in certain sectors (mining, coffee), this indicator improved to 3.8 per cent in 1992, 5.3 per cent in 1993 and 5.7 per cent in 1994, years in which the biggest contributions were made by non-tradeable goods and services such as the services provided by the financial, governmental, communications and construction sectors. The bulk of light industry (textiles, clothing, leather goods) declined sharply owing to its poor competitiveness in the international market.

The situation of the industrial and agricultural sectors is currently serious. In 1990 only six companies went into receivership, in 1994 the figure was 27, and in 1995 74 companies had taken this step by October and a further 70 were in such difficulties that they might have to do likewise.[30]

The present Government acknowledges in the National Development Plan:

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[28] In demographic terms, there was a considerable increase in the proportion of urban dwellers in the total population. The process of urbanization which began in mid-century produced a shift from a numerical balance in the urban/rural composition of the population to a situation in which the urban component predominated (it currently represents about 70 per cent). Furthermore, scientific and technological advances, accompanied by the impact of policies, particularly in health and education, have produced a sharp decline in death and birth rates over the last two decades, together with improvements in the quality of life and the ageing of the population.

[29] Office of the President of the Republic. El Salto Social: Bases para el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 1994-1998. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1994.

[30] Information from the Companies Inspectorate quoted by Consuelo Ahumada in El Modelo Neoliberal, Santa Fe de Bogotá, Ancora Editores, 1996.

the Social Leap Forward that administrative reforms and the modernization of the State have left the country with a large number of unemployed and that the agricultural crisis which manifested itself in 1991-1993 in the loss of some 230,000 jobs cannot be ignored.

The main features of the employment situation are determined by the dominant patterns of the urbanization and structural adjustment processes: most of the employed population lives in urban areas and works in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, specifically in industry, services and commerce.

THE URBAN EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN COLUMBIA

Attention has to be drawn to the following features of Colombia's labour market in the first half of the 1990s:

* Initial increase and subsequent decline in total employment rates. In seven metropolitan areas the percentage ratio of the economically active population (EAP) to the population of working age (PWA) was over 50 per cent at the end of the 1980s; it reached a high point of 60 per cent in 1993 and since then has tended to stagnate or decline. In 1995 it fell to 58 per cent.

* Tertiarization of EAP. This situation is found in particular in the contributions of the commercial and services sectors to jobs creation. In the period referred to above, these sectors together with the financial services sector accounted for about 62 per cent of the employed population in the towns. The areas encountering the greatest difficulties include:

> Social security. A total of 49.6 per cent of urban workers do not have any kind of social security;
>
> Incomes. A total of 41 per cent of independent workers and 51 per cent of informal own-account workers have incomes below the minimum monthly wage.[31]

The complexity of the country's current socio-economic situation has produced crises in some areas. Between 1993 and 1995 employment exhibited the following characteristics:

* Initial decline and subsequent increase in unemployment. In the 1990s urban unemployment fell to levels below 10 per cent; the lowest rate of 7.75 per cent occurred in 1993. At present, owing to the effects of poor competitiveness, smuggling and the economic crisis in some production sectors, unemployment has increased. This trend was already clear in 1995, when the rate rose to 9.37 per cent.[32]

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[31] Lopez. Op. cit.

[32] This upward trend produced an unemployment rate of 10.4 per cent for March 1996, rising to 11.9 per cent in December of that year. DANE figures.

* Gender variables in unemployment. An examination of unemployment by sex shows that the rates for women are two times higher than for men: the women's rates were 10.95 per cent in 1993 and 12.38 per cent in 1995, while the men's rates were 5.3 and 7.1 per cent in the same two years. In December 1996, according to DANE data, the female unemployment rate was 15.1 and the male 9.6 per cent (DANE press release).

Analysis of the formal and informal sectors in Columbia

One of the fundamental aspects of an understanding of the urban employment situation in Colombia is the differentiation between the formal and informal sectors. This can be studied from several standpoints:

* Differentiation by sex. The formal sector is made up of 60 per cent men and 40 per cent women; the informal sector has a similar composition by sex: 58 per cent men and 42 per cent women.[33]

* Differentiation by age group. The youngest workers (aged 19 and under) account for 4 per cent of the formal labour force and 15 per cent of the informal, i.e. it is the population group most vulnerable to unemployment: young people take jobs requiring less work experience and lower qualifications. They generally come from the poorer population groups and enter the ranks of the employed and unemployed on terms of greater disadvantage in respect of educational training.

This is a very sensitive area: individually it is assumed that attendance at school is associated with the minimum skills and qualifications required for the worse-paid jobs; but the fact that the education of work-seekers leaves much to be desired has an unfavourable impact on Colombia's growth possibilities, since it constitutes an obstacle to the increased productivity and competitiveness essential to effective integration in the international market.

* Differentiation by level of education. Twenty-two per cent of the population employed in the formal sector has either primary education or no education (1%) as against 50 per cent of the population employed in the informal sector.

* Differentiation by socio-economic status. Most people from the lower strata of the population work in the informal sector; two-fifths (39%) of workers in this sector are from the lower strata, in contrast with a quarter (24%) in the formal sector.

* Differentiation by income. In the informal sector average incomes are only 56.5 per cent of earnings in the formal sector. The informal sector is so precarious that only 13 per cent of its workers have incomes in excess of two minimum monthly wages (table 11.1).

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[33] Patrick McEwan. "Heterogeneidad en el sector informal urbano de Colombia". Coyuntura Social No. 13. Fedesarrollo, November 1995.

Table 11.1
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED POPULATION BY INCOME AND ECONOMIC SECTOR, 1992
(minimum wages)

INCOME	FORMAL SECTOR	INFORMAL SECTOR
< 1 monthly wage	17	53
1 to 2	50	34
> 2	33	13

Source: Patrick McEwan, 1995.

Characteristics of employment in Columbia

Employment in Colombia exhibits two contradictions which affect its structure: the first is the decline in urban employment; the second is connected with a structural characteristic of unemployment: the imbalance between the qualifications required for certain jobs and the qualifications of the applicants.[34] This is an important factor because it limits the possibility of equal access to jobs carrying status and social and work recognition for large numbers of Colombia's urban labour force.

The poverty line

Analysis of this topic is an extremely complicated exercise. Like any social phenomenon, it has to be viewed from many different standpoints, including the following:

Poverty, extreme poverty and destitution

The relevant indicators show a decline in poverty in Colombia in the period 1985-1991 and a slight increase in 1993. However, the gap between the rural and urban sectors persists.[35] Some of the indicators used to determine the extent of poverty, such as unsatisfied basic needs (UBN) and numbers living in extreme poverty, show this development (table 11.2).

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[34] Unemployment in Columbia has a number of structural characteristics: the imbalance between the qualifications required for jobs and the lack of educational/work qualifications of the applicants. One specific feature of urban employment is the decline in the number of jobs for qualified persons and the increase in jobs requiring little experience and offering low wages. See Lopez, H., 1995. Memorias del Foro Nacional sobre Competitividad, Desarrollo Tecnológico y Formación para el Trabajo. Bogotá, p. 257 et seq.

[35] Office of the President of the Republic, DNP. El Salto Social. Bases para el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1994-1998. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1994, p. 37.

In 1985 the proportion of rural households having unsatisfied basic needs was 2.2 times greater than the proportion of urban households, and by 1993 this gap had increased to almost three times. In other words, while one in five urban households has unsatisfied basic needs, this situation affects three in five rural households. Moreover, the current trends in this respect in rural areas are the same as the ones exhibited by urban areas two decades ago.

Although the UBN figure has fallen, it cannot be denied that the purchasing power of workers' incomes has also fallen. This purchasing power declined in the 1990s from the 1980s figure as a result of the resurgence of inflation in 1985-1986, when most of the losers were in the informal sector of the economy. Own-account workers and small businesses suffered losses of about 10 per cent.

Table 11.2
EVOLUTION OF UBN POPULATION AND POPULATION LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY, 1985-1993

UBN population

YEAR	TOTAL	CHIEF TOWNS	REST OF COUNTRY
1985	45.6	32.3	72.6
1991	33.7	18.9	55.3
1993	32.2	20.6	58.9

Population in extreme poverty

YEAR	TOTAL	CHIEF TOWNS	REST OF COUNTRY
1985	22.8	12.6	44.4
1991	14.0	5.7	25.9
1993	13.5	6.1	13.5

Source: El Salto Social. Bases para el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1994-1998.

Other indicators such as the population living below the poverty line and the population living below the destitution line (persons who cannot obtain the necessary resources to purchase the basket of foodstuffs supplying the essential nutrients) point to an almost static or even worsening situation, as shown in table 11.3.

Measurements using the poverty line show that more than half the total population is living in poverty and highlight the differences between urban and rural areas. In rural areas about 70 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, and their situation has been aggravated by the fall in real incomes and the current increase in unemployment.

The population living below the destitution line also exhibits different characteristics in the urban and rural sectors of the country, for most of the destitute people live in rural areas. The percentage differences in comparison with the figures for urban areas remain in a proportion of about 3 to 1. In addition, between 1988 and 1992 this indicator showed an upward trend: in the towns the number of destitute households rose from 11.6 to 13 per cent and in rural areas from 36.3 to 37 per cent.

Lastly, unemployment rates are high in rural areas, as can be seen from the low income levels of the employed population and the indicators of poverty and destitution mentioned above.[36]

Table 11.3
EVOLUTION OF THE POPULATIONS LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE AND BELOW THE DESTITUTION-EXTREME POVERTY LINE, 1988-1992

Population below the poverty line

YEAR	TOTAL	CHIEF TOWNS	REST OF COUNTRY
1988	54.3	44.0	68.2
1991	56.2	46.2	70.4
1992	53.6	46.4	69.5

Population below the destitution line

YEAR	TOTAL	CHIEF TOWNS	REST OF COUNTRY
1988	22.1	11.6	36.3
1991	22.0	11.8	36.8
1992	20.5	13.0	37.0

Source: El Salto Social. Bases para el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1994-1998.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN COLOMBIA'S LABOUR MARKET

Women's participation in the labour market has increased in recent years: in 1992 women accounted for 41.9 per cent of the economically active population (EAP) in urban areas and for 42.7 per cent in 1995. In rural areas this figure rose from 27.8 per cent in 1992 to 28.8 per cent in 1995.[37]

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[36] Lopez. Op. cit., pp. 67-68.

Similarly, the women's employment rate grew constantly: it was 34.5 per cent in 1992 and 35.7 per cent in 1995, in contrast with the male rate, which fell from 65.5 per cent in 1992 to 64.2 per cent in 1995.[38]

Table 11.4

EAP, EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT, 1992-1995, BY SEX, AREA AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

		1992			1995		
		EAP	EMPLOYED	UNEMPL'D	EAP	EMPLOYED	UNEMPL'D
TOTAL	Total	13 909 710	12 919 664	990 046	14 895 276	13 766 325	1 128 951
	None	1 017 799	979 070	38 729	928 743	906 602	22 141
	Primary	6 201 107	5 902 328	298 779	6 077 416	5 763 975	313 441
	Secondary	5 068 578	4 523 293	545 285	5 980 939	5 339 009	641 930
	Higher	1 488 275	1 386 366	101 909	1 858 442	1 709 097	149 345
Men	Total	8 876 043	8 461 787	414 256	9 338 730	8 844 870	493 860
	None	726 223	702 582	23 641	659 702	647 594	12 108
	Primary	4 292 627	4 163 799	128 828	4 185 470	4 027 418	158 052
	Secondary	2 957 339	2 735 899	221 440	3 485 637	3 222 492	263 145
	Higher	813 943	776 230	37 713	972 092	912 206	59 886
Women	Total	5 033 667	4 457 877	575 790	5 556 546	4 921 455	635 091
	None	291 576	276 488	15 088	269 041	259 008	10 033
	Primary	1 908 480	1 738 529	169 951	1 891 946	1 736 557	155 389
	Secondary	2 111 239	1 787 394	323 845	2 495 302	2 116 517	378 785
	Higher	674 332	610 136	64 196	886 350	796 891	89 459
URBAN	Total	8 286 109	7 541 580	744 529	9 054 274	8 214 718	839 556
	None	244 718	226 532	18 186	197 040	188 508	8 532
	Primary	2 712 360	2 529 996	182 364	2 556 244	2 371 486	184 758
	Secondary	3 883 863	3 438 910	444 953	4 561 480	4 056 512	504 968
	Higher	1 356 847	1 261 798	95 049	1 700 992	1 561 318	139 674
Men	Total	4 815 385	4 504 502	310 883	5 184 618	4 819 020	365 598
	None	136 892	126 238	310 883	99 942	94 608	5 334
	Primary	1 663 303	1 579 622	83 681	1 561 929	1 466 788	95 141
	Secondary	2 224 967	2 044 964	180 003	2 600 024	2 392 751	207 273

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[37] System of Sociodemographic Indicators for Columbia (SISD). Boletín No. 13. DNP, 1996.

[38] Idem.

	Higher	739 678	705 157	34 521	896 607	839 426	57 181
Women	Total	3 470 274	3 037 078	433 646	3 869 656	3 395 698	473 958
	None	107 826	100 294	7 532	97 098	93 900	3 198
	Primary	1 049 057	950 374	98 683	994 315	904 698	89 617
	Secondary	1 658 896	1 393 946	264 950	1 463 977	1 663 761	297 695
	Higher	617 169	556 641	60 528	804 385	721 892	82 493
RURAL	Total	5 623 601	5 378 084	245 517	5 841 002	5 551 607	289 395
	None	773 081	752 538	20 543	731 703	718 094	13 609
	Primary	3 488 747	3 372 332	116 415	3 521 172	3 392 489	128 683
	Secondary	1 184 715	1 084 383	100 332	1 419 459	1 282 497	136 962
	Higher	131 428	124 568	6 860	157 450	147 779	9 671
Men	Total	4 060 658	3 957 285	103 373	4 154 112	4 025 850	128 262
	None	589 331	576 344	12 987	559 760	552 986	6 774
	Primary	2 629 324	2 584 177	45 147	2 623 541	2 560 630	62 911
	Secondary	732 372	690 935	41 437	885 613	829 741	55 872
	Higher	74 265	71 073	3 192	75 485	72 780	2 705
Women	Total	1 562 943	1 420 799	142 144	1 686 890	1 525 757	161 133
	None	183 750	176 194	7 556	171 943	165 108	6 835
	Primary	859 423	788 155	71 268	897 631	831 859	65 772
	Secondary	452 343	393 448	58 895	533 846	452 756	81 090
	Higher	57 163	53 495	3 668	81 965	74 999	6 966

Source: DNP, SISD. Boletin No. 13 de Empleo, 1996. Table 1.

Out of a total of 4,921,455 employed women in 1995, 37 per cent worked in services, 28.6 per cent in commerce, and 18 per cent in manufacturing.[39] Although most women continue to work in traditionally female branches of the economy, there has been a significant increase in their participation in non-traditional jobs such as construction, the financial sector and electricity (table 11.5).

Table 11.5
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY AND SEX, 1988-1995

		1988	1992	1993	1994	1995
TOTAL	Total	9 170 484	12 919 664	13 360 787	13 488 623	13 766 325
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	3 092 574	3 338 152	3 130 356	3 090 376	3 173 474
	Mining	132 276	155 798	142 719	139 592	107 997

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[39] Idem.

	Manufacturing	1 314 418	1 932 537	2 164 247	2 092 744	2 123 793
	Electricity, gas, steam	46 761	79 908	74 974	78 722	68 707
	Construction	391 956	590 942	732 208	789 657	831 356
	Commerce	1 664 383	2 719 988	2 776 891	2 884 800	2 967 583
	Transport	403 131	638 438	717 906	744 724	757 321
	Finance	329 150	494 499	562 239	596 961	627 938
	Services	1 793 332	2 958 146	3 050 464	3 069 217	3 102 924
Men	Total	6 271 434	8 461 787	8 663 188	8 759 773	8 844 870
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	2 702 719	2 960 371	2 775 788	2 722 497	2 764 479
	Mining	92 065	118 150	106 365	103 379	90 607
	Manufacturing	760 624	1 098 274	1 234 910	1 246 022	1 235 865
	Electricity, gas, steam	37 103	67 713	59 524	67 356	55 341
	Construction	376 555	570 296	704 175	748 222	796 198
	Commerce	915 513	1 453 186	1 500 735	1 565 777	1 558 131
	Transport	368 546	576 866	648 535	676 537	687 470
	Finance	213 634	329 823	351 638	368 488	393 119
	Services	803 268	1 278 760	1 275 743	1 260 625	1 260 651
Women	Total	2 899 050	4 457 877	4 697 599	4 728 850	4 921 455
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	389 855	377 781	354 568	368 239	409 265
	Mining	40 211	37 648	36 354	36 213	17 390
	Manufacturing	553 794	834 263	929 337	846 722	887 928
	Electricity, gas, steam	9 568	9 195	15 450	11 366	13 366
	Construction	15 401	20 646	28 033	41 435	35 058
	Commerce	748 870	1 266 802	1 276 156	1 319 023	1 409 452
	Transport	34 585	61 572	69 371	68 187	69 851
	Finance	115 516	164 676	210 601	228 473	234 819
	Services	990 064	1 679 386	1 774 721	1 808 592	1 842 273

Source: DNP, SISD. Boletín No. 13 de Empleo, 1996. Table 6.

Despite the increasing numbers of women joining Colombia's labour market, women continue to suffer higher unemployment and earn on average lower wages than men. In December 1996 the female unemployment rate was significantly higher than the male rate: it rose from 12.6 per cent in 1995 to 15.[illegible] per cent in 1996, while the male rate rose from 6.5 to 9.6 per cent over the same two years.[40] The women most seriously affected by unemployment are found in the 15 to 29 age group (table 11.7) and they have complete or incomplete secondary education (table 11.8).

Table 11.7
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN SEVEN METROPOLITAN AREAS IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1994-1996

EDUCATION LEVEL	1994		1995		1996	
	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN
No education	8.7	6.9	9.2	6.9	12.8	9.8
Incomplete primary	9.5	5.7	8.4	6.3	11.5	10.2
Complete primary	11.3	5.1	10.5	5.3	12.4	7.7
Incomplete secondary	20.2	8.0	15.8	9.0	19.7	11.0
Complete secondary	15.0	7.5	13.9	6.4	16.3	9.2
Incomplete higher	12.3	9.1	12.2	9.6	13.9	10.6
Complete higher	6.0	3.9	4.8	3.1	6.6	4.5
TOTAL	13.9	6.7	12.0	6.8	14.6	9.0

Source: DNP, ENH. Tasa de desocupación, siete áreas metropolitanas, mes de junio, 1994, 1995, 1996.

Table 11.8
INFORMAL SECTOR: EMPLOYED POPULATION BY SEX AND DEGREE OF INFORMALITY IN SEVEN METROPOLITAN AREAS, MONTH OF JUNE 1984-1996

YEAR	WOMEN		MEN	
	Population	Rate	Population	Rate
1984	1 250 385	57.5	2 052 818	51.4
1986	1 365 673	58.2	2 200 625	52.1
1988	1 606 562	58.8	2 416 639	54.4
1992	1 918 932	56.3	2 760 746	52.6
1994	1 955 047	54.1	2 841 227	51.2
1996	2 001 458	52.2	2 874 168	52.0

Source: DNP. ENH-Sector informal, junios 1984, 1986, 1988, 1992, 1994, 1996.

In 1995 the average wage differential between women and men was 15.17 per cent when women employed in domestic service are included, and 10.07 per cent when they are excluded. The studies indicate that this wage gap can only be explained by discrimination: if it were not for discrimination, many women, being better educated than men, would be better paid than them. But, oddly, the wage differential is more marked for the better qualified women.[41]

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[40] DANE. Situación del Mercado Laboral a Diciembre de 1996. Once Areas Metropolitanas. ENH, press release, December, 1996.

PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN THE TOTAL POPULATION AND IN THE POPULATION OF WORKING AGE

The process known as demographic transition is producing declining birth and death rates in Colombia: a marked downward trend in the younger and an upward trend in the older age groups.

It is important to stress that the changes in the patterns of reproduction are taking place in parallel with other development processes in Colombia, in particular urbanization, which is characterized by migration from the countryside to the town and by the industrialization and modernization of some sectors of the economy.

Women account for more than 50 per cent of the total population; this proportion is increasing more in the chief towns owing inter alia to the migratory processes described earlier, in which adult women displaced by the violence constitute a major factor. According to the statistics of the DANE national household surveys, between 1993 and 1995 women accounted for almost 53 per cent of the total urban population (table 11.9).

Table 11.9
COMPOSITION OF THE TOTAL URBAN POPULATION BY SEX, 1993-1995

YEAR	TOTAL	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
1993	11 450 229	5 374 273	46.94	6 075 956	53.06
1994	19 824 955	9 300 894	46.92	10 524 061	53.08
1995	20 218 650	9 505 017	47.01	10 713 643	52.99

Source: Based on the DANE national household surveys, stages 81, 85 and 89, for the month of September 1993, 1994 and 1995.[42]

According to the information for the last three years, the proportion of women in the total urban population has shown little variation, remaining some six per cent higher than the proportion of men. However, this gender differential is greater when only the population aged 12 and older is taken into account (population of working age), when the proportion of women exceeds that of men by almost nine points, maintaining the trend of the early 1990s (table 11.10).

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[41] Idem. In this study the author analyzes the wage differentials by controlling education and experience.

[42] The tables in this section were prepared by Guillermo Acosta on the basis of the national household surveys.

Table 11.10
COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF WORKING AGE BY SEX, 1993-1995

YEAR	TOTAL	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
1993	8 735 180	3 997 595	45.76	4 737 585	54.24
1994	15 173 194	6 932 404	45.69	8 240 790	54.31
1995	15 482 719	7 065 903	45.64	8 416 816	54.36

Source: Based on ENH-DANE, stages 81, 85 and 89.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT[43]

Proportion of women in the economically active population (EAP)

One of the most important socio-economic developments in the past three decades is the substantial increase in the numbers of women in Colombia's labour force. Their contribution to the EAP rose from a modest 17.3 per cent in 1964 to about 43 per cent in 1995, as shown in table 11.11.

However, it must be pointed out that the definition of EAP includes only persons engaging in work connected with a labour market, as producers of economic goods and services. On this basis, the preponderance of women in the EAP declines by more than 10 per cent, while the proportion of men rises by a similar amount.

Table 11.11
ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION BY SEX, 1993-1995

YEAR	TOTAL	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
1993	5 260 818	2 987 362	56.79	2 273 456	43.21
1994	8 755 600	5 049 117	57.67	3 706 488	42.33
1995	9 054 274	5 184 618	57.26	3 869 656	42.74

Source: Based on ENH-DANE, stages 81, 85 and 89.

A comparison of the percentage ratios of EAP to PWA by sex (total participation rates) illustrates the gap between men and women in terms of access to the labour market. In the period 1993-1995, 73 out of every 100 men of working age were economically active, but this appeared to be true for only 45 or 48 out of every 100 women aged over 12. This is due to the definition of EAP referred to above.

The gap is greater when the total participation by age group is taken into account, for it shows disadvantages for women and young people, which can be regarded as the most vulnerable groups with respect to access to employment (table 11.12).

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[43] This section highlights the characteristics of the participation of women in urban employment, particularly in Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Manizales and Pasto.

Between the ages of 12 and 14, when no child should be working, the total participation rate has hovered around 6 per cent and its distribution by sex shows that the proportion of girls in this group ranges between 3.5 and 4.5 per cent. Boys achieve almost double those rates; this confirms that more boys engage in productive work but also masks the domestic work done by girls.[44]

Table 11.12

GLOBAL PARTICIPATION RATES BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, 1993-1995

	Participation rate		
	1993	1994	1995
Total	60.23	54.47	58.23
12-14	6.33	5.29	6.07
15-19	35.11	31.17	31.59
20-29	75.60	73.25	73.86
30-39	81.44	79.11	80.22
40-49	75.66	74.36	75.40
50-59	60.09	56.44	57.85
60-69	35.39	34.12	35.90
70-79	17.52	18.13	16.63
80+	8.66	8.44	7.20
Men	74.73	72.65	73.18
12-14	8.04	7.10	7.77
15-19	41.11	36.45	37.15
20-29	88.70	87.18	88.17
30-39	98.36	97.38	97.58
40-49	96.68	95.83	96.55
50-59	87.19	85.14	84.26
60-69	60.33	58.15	57.60
70-79	31.60	31.06	29.61
Women	47.99	44.73	45.72
12-14	4.55	3.48	4.45
15-19	29.97	26.82	26.89
20-29	64.80	61.86	62.22
30-39	67.54	63.99	65.97
40-49	57.73	55.38	56.56
50-59	36.50	32.88	35.89
60-69	15.63	15.06	18.28
70-79	6.89	8.09	6.47

Source: ENH-DANE, month of June 1993, 1994 and 1995.

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[44] On the circumstances of the work done by children and young people, see Carmen Elisa Flórez and others. Niños y jovenes: Cuantos y dónde trabajan? Santa Fe de Bogotá, Ministry of Employment and University of the Andes, 1995; and Catalina Turbay and Elvia Acuña. Trabajo Infanto-juvenil y educación básica en Colombia. Santa Fe de Bogotá, UNICEF, 1995.

For both men and women the total participation rate increases with age, reaching a high point in the 30-39 range. However, between the ages of 20 and 49 men have participation rates of close to 100 per cent, while the rates for women are barely 70 per cent.

Women and the economically inactive population (EIP)

The classification of the population into different employment categories is based on criteria which give more weight to the production of goods and services. Accordingly, the population directly involved in the labour market is regarded as relevant in studies on the labour force, while large groups of the female population performing unpaid productive and reproductive work are regarded as "economically inactive".

This means that the work performed by the 2.8 million women classified by the statistics as "housewives" is regarded as unproductive, and the contribution which such women make through the socialization and raising of children, running the household and even generating income from home-based activities is disregarded (table 11.13).

Table 11.13
INACTIVE POPULATION BY SEX, 1993-1995

YEAR	TOTAL	MEN	&	WOMEN	%
1993	3 474 362	1 010 233	29.08	2 464 129	70.92
1884	6 417 504	1 883 287	29.34	4 534 307	70.66
1995	6 428 445	1 881 285	29.27	4 547 160	70.73

Source: DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

The EIP has the following features:

* By type of activity. There are two big groups - students and housewives - accounting for an average of 87 per cent of the EIP; the remainder includes pensioners, persons living on unearned income, and others.

* By sex. Women account for 71 per cent of EIP and 62 per cent of this total is engaged in "unproductive" work such as housework.

* By age group. The EIP information shows that household duties are the main activity for women for a period of 20 or so years. For men this development takes place after they have completed their working lives, so that the proportion of men in the EIP increases substantially (32.3%) after age 60.

Urban female employment: employed population by branch of activity

To the traditional reproductive functions associated with the household must be added the increasing extra volume of work done by women, who accounted for about 41 per cent of the urban labour force in 1993-1995 (table 11.15).

Table 11.14
INACTIVE URBAN POPULATION BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, SEPTEMBER 1994 (inter-group percentages)

Range	Total	% Men	% Women
12-19	2 549 637	45.0	55.0
20-29	1 014 785	21.6	78.4
30-39	664 799	5.7	94.3
40-49	538 647	7.6	92.4
50-59	562 922	15.3	84.6
60+	1 086 804	32.3	67.7
TOTAL	6 417 594	1 883 287 (29.4%)	4 534 307 (70.7%)

Source: DANE-ENH, stage 85.

Table 11.15
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY SEX, 1993-1995

YEAR	EMPLOYED	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
1993	4 853 032	2 828 557	58.3	2 024 475	41.7
1994	8 049 220	4 773 588	59.3	3 275 632	40.7
1995	8 214 718	4 819 020	58.7	3 395 698	41.3

Source: DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

The distribution of women workers by branch of economic activity shows that large numbers of them work in ares in which they have had a traditional role, earning low incomes and generally not holding managerial posts or having control of resources (table 11.16).

Between 1993 and 1995 women's employment by branch of activity showed small percentage increases: in services it rose from 37.92 to 39.11 per cent,[45] and in commerce from 45 to 46 per cent; but in industry the figure fell from 23.91 to 21.34 per cent.

The branches in which women are least represented are financial services (7%), transport (2%) and the other categories (less than 1% in each).

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[45] The proportion of women in this branch has declined over the last two decades. In 1975, 50 per cent of the female labour force was employed in the community, social and personal services sector. See Luz Gabriela Arango. Diagnóstico sobre la situación de la mujer ejecutiva y empresaria en el sector público y privado en Colombia. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Presidential Council on Youth, Women and the Family, 1994.

Table 11.16
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY AND SEX, 1993-1995
(inter-group percentages)

	1993			1994			1995		
Branch	TOTAL	Women	Men	TOTAL	Women	Men	TOTAL	Women	Men
Agric.	1.1	0.7	1.5	1.8	0.8	2.4	1.5	0.6	2.2
Mining	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.07	0.6
Ind.	23.3	23.9	22.8	21.3	21.0	21.5	21.1	21.3	21.0
E/G/W	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.3	1.1	0.7	0.3	1.0
Const.	7.0	0.8	11.4	7.4	1.1	11.6	7.5	1.0	12.0
Com.	25.3	27.1	24.0	26.8	29.2	25.2	26.7	29.4	24.7
Trans.	6.6	1.8	10.1	6.9	1.7	10.5	6.9	1.7	10.7
Fin.s.	7.5	6.9	7.9	6.8	6.6	7.0	7.1	6.4	7.6
Serv.	28.0	37.9	20.9	27.7	39.0	20.0	28.1	39.1	20.3

Source: Based on ENH-DANE, stages 81, 85 and 89.

In almost all the branches of activity the participation by sex indicates a majority of men:

* In mining, construction and transport men account for over 90 per cent of the labour force, and in agriculture and electricity/gas/water they make up more than 80 per cent of the employed population.

* Women account for the majority of employed persons only in services, as can be seen from table 11.12. This branch still has the highest numbers of women in the urban employment structure. The numbers of women increased from 56 to 58 per cent of the population employed in the sector between 1993 and 1995.

* Women's contribution to the industrial labour force has varied little: 42.9 per cent in 1993, 40.1 per cent in 1994, and 41.8 per cent in 1995.

* In financial services women increased their proportion between 1993 and 1994 with figures of about 40 per cent, which fell back to 37 per cent in 1995.

* In 1993-1995 the branches employing fewest women were construction (between 5 and 6.14 per cent) and transport (between 11.23 and 9.89 per cent). These branches have traditionally been regarded as men's work.

* The largest declines in female employment in this period occurred in agriculture and mining. In agriculture, the proportion of women fell from a quarter of employed persons in 1993 to a sixth in 1995; and in mining from 28.9 to 8 per cent.

As a result of the economic adjustments and other structural factors in Colombia, some sectors of the economy saw their development rate fall, with a decline in the number of jobs on offer, so that between 1993 and 1994 higher growth was found in the categories of employer and own-account worker (characteristics of the informal sector). The least vigorous categories were unpaid family worker, private-sector worker or employee, government worker or

/...

employee, and domestic worker (table 11.18).

The largest group in the distribution of employed persons by job was private-sector employees and own-account workers (80%). Lower percentages were found for government employees (8%), domestic workers (5%), employers (4% to 5%), and unpaid family workers (1%).

Table 11.17
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY AND SEX, 1993-1995
(inter-group percentages)

	1993		1994		1995	
Branch	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Agricul.	25.9	74.1	19.0	81.0	15.6	84.4
Mining	28.9	71.1	23.3	76.7	7.6	92.4
Industry	42.9	57.1	40.1	59.9	41.8	58.2
E/G/W	23.2	76.8	17.4	82.6	19.5	80.5
Constr.	5.0	95.0	6.1	93.9	5.4	94.6
Commerce	44.8	55.2	44.3	55.7	45.7	54.3
Transport	11.2	88.8	9.9	90.1	9.9	90.1
Fin. serv.	38.5	61.5	39.2	60.8	37.5	62.5
Services	56.5	43.5	57.2	42.8	57.5	42.5

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

Table 11.18
PROPORTIONS OF THE EMPLOYED POPULATION BY JOB, 1993-1995
(percentages)

YEAR	Unpaid fam. worker	Private employee	Government employee	Domestic worker	Own-account worker	Employer
1993	1.3	55.3	8.1	5.1	26.6	3.7
1994	1.4	54.3	8.6	5.3	25.7	4.8
1995	1.1	51.6	8.4	4.9	29.4	4.6

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

While it is true that women have increased their weight in the urban labour force by a significant amount, most of this increase has been in jobs with low socio-economic status. An intra-group analysis of the jobs held by women reveals the circumstances summarized in table 11.19.

The proportion of women increased in three categories: own-account worker, employer, and government worker or employee. It is important to note the increase in the informal sector which, together with the employer category, showed the greatest percentage increases in the composition of the labour force.

Table 11.19
PROPORTION OF THE EMPLOYED POPULATION BY JOB AND SEX, 1993-1995
(percentages)

	Unpaid fam. worker		Private employee		Government employee		Domestic worker		Own-account worker		Employer	
YEAR	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
1993	32	68	61	39	54	46	3	97	64	36	78	22
1994	27	73	62	38	56	44	2	98	54	36	77	23
1995	28	72	62	39	53	47	2	98	63	37	76	24

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

The disadvantages suffered by women in the labour market are highlighted by the fact that their participation increased in the informal sector of the economy from 36.2 per cent in 1993 to 36.8 per cent in 1995. Work in this sector usually implies instability and lack of job security and benefits. The numerical increase in the proportion of women in this group, from 467,000 in 1993 to 880,000 in 1995, is also significant.

This increase corroborates the view that since 1992 the employment trend in Colombia has been downwards in urban sectors and that structural unemployment is increasing, with a characteristic supply of high-qualification jobs for which there is no demand, while new vacancies are oversubscribed by workers with few qualifications.[46]

Inequality is manifest in categories such as unpaid family worker, domestic worker, and employer. In the first two cases, where the jobs carry lower status, there are more women workers than men; there are twice as many unpaid women workers as men and they account for 72.1 per cent of the category; in the case of domestic work, in 1995 there were 58 women for every one man, so that they represented 98.2 per cent of the total.

In the category with highest social and economic standing - employer - women have only a third of the job opportunities of men: 24 per cent of employers are women. The trend in this category shows a substantial increase in the numbers of women over the past 15 years, for in 1980 women accounted for only 16 per cent of employers in urban areas.

In the public sector women constitute a large proportion of the total, but there are few women holding positions of power or decision. One indicator of this situation is the distribution by sex in the central civil service lists in 1995, which is summarized in table 11.20.

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[46] López. Op. cit.

Table 20
TOTAL CIVIL SERVICE LIST BY GRADE AND SEX, 1995[47]

GRADE	WOMEN	%	MEN	%	TOTAL
Director	362	19	1 497	81	1 859
Adviser	386	43	512	57	898
Executive	1 692	26	4 713	74	6 405
Professional	7 556	39	11 707	61	19 263
Technical	5 204	34	10 012	66	15 216
Admin. assist.	19 251	63	11 184	37	30 435
Operative	7 973	26	22 532	74	30 505
Total	42 424	41	62 157	59	104 581

Source: Ministry of the Environment/Gender Unit/CA. Policy for Equality and Participation of Women.

Table 11.21 shows the inequality of opportunity with respect to jobs carrying higher prestige and power.

Table 11.21
DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL CIVIL SERVICE ROLL BY GRADE AND SEX, 1995

GRADE	WOMEN	%	MEN	%
Director	362	0.8	1 497	2.4
Adviser	386	0.9	512	0.9
Executive	1 692	4.2	4 713	8.2
Professional	7 556	18.5	11 707	20.3
Technical	5 204	12.8	10 012	17.5
Admin. assist.	19 251	44.3	11 184	17.9
Operative	7 973	18.6	22 532	32.8
Total	42 424	100.0	62 157	100.0

Source: Ministry of the Environment/Gender Unit/CA. Policy for Equality and Participation of Women.

It can thus be seen that:

* There are more women than men at the level of administrative assistant: 44.3 against 17.9 per cent.

* There is a slight difference of only 7 per cent in the professional and technical categories. In fact, the figures are 38 per cent for men and 31 per cent for women.

* The possibility of appointment to a post of director are three times greater for men than for women, and in the case of executive posts it is two times greater for men.

Female employment by occupational group and branch of activity at the intra-group level showed the following characteristics in 1995 (table 11.22):

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[47] Excluding figures for the Ministries of Defence and Environment.

* Most women professional or technical staff (87%) worked in services, including financial services.

* A third of the women working as managers or civil servants were employed in industry, followed by a high proportion in services and financial services (42.6%) and in commerce (17.3%).

* 90 per cent of the women working as administrative assistants were employed in industry, commerce and services.

* 86 per cent of the women working as shopkeepers or sales staff were employed in the commerce sector, one of the areas of greatest job insecurity.

* 94 per cent of the women working in services were employed in services and commerce.

Table 11.22
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAIN OCCUPATIONAL GROUP, BRANCH OF ACTIVITY AND SEX, 1995
(intra-group percentages)

	Prof. or tech.		Manager / Civil serv.		Admin. assist.		Shop/ sales		Services		Agric.		Non-agric.	
BRANCH	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Agric.	1	1	1	1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	77	82	0.2	0.4
Mining	1	0	4	1	0.4	0.6	0.3	-	1	0.1	-	-	-	-
Ind.	10	6	35	32	18	14	8	8	8	4	1	2	34	90
E/G/W	1	1	2	1	2	1	0.1	0.4	1	0.1	1	1	0.1	-
Constr.	8	2	3	2	3	3	0.2	0.1	2	0.3	1	22	1	-
Comm.	4	3	15	17	24	25	86	86	29	18	5	6	5	4
Transp.	3	1	9	5	10	5	1	1	2	1	19	1	-	-
F.serv.	21	10	14	22	21	23	4	2	21	2	1	5	1	1
Serv.	51	77	20	20	21	29	2	3	40	76	5	5	17	3

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

Women and access to new jobs

In 1994 and 1995 the most vigorous branches of urban activity in terms of job creation were: financial services with 33,671 jobs, construction with 21,638, commerce with 32,317, industry with 19,636, transport with 13,077, and services with 76,582, whereas mining, electricity/gas/water, and agriculture lost 8,629, 19,920 and 3,816 jobs respectively.

Although women took 120,066 of the 165,498 new jobs created between 1994 and 1995 (72.5%), proving themselves to be more competitive than men, they still suffer inequality with respect to jobs requiring high levels of qualification and carrying high remuneration (table 11.18).

The participation of women by economic sector shows that they take low-status jobs in industry, services and commerce, and that they are losing jobs in agriculture, mining and construction, with drops of 30, 74 and 10 per cent respectively. In the case of men, there is a downward trend in their participation in industry, commerce, electricity/gas/water, agriculture and mining.

Table 11.23
POPULATION EMPLOYED IN NEW JOBS BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY AND SEX, 1994-1995

Branch	Difference 1995-1994	Men Difference 95-94	Women Difference 95-94
Agriculture	-19 920	-11 899	-8 021
	-14.0%	-10.3%	-29.5%
Mining	-8 629	-1 535	-7 094
	-21.1%	-4.9%	-74.5%
Industry	-19 636	-17 664	37 300
	-1.2%	-1.7%	5.4%
E/G/W	-3 816	-4 340	524
	-6.3%	-8.6%	5.0%
Construction	-21 368	24 732	-3 364
	-3.6%	4.5%	-9.2%
Commerce	-32 317	-10 922	43 239
	-1.5%	-0.9%	4.5%
Transport	13 077	11 788	1 289
	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%
Financial services	33 671	30 590	3 081
	6.1%	9.2%	1.4%
Services	76 582	24 466	52 116
	3.4%	2.6%	4.1%
Total jobs	165 498	45 432	120 066
Annual rate	2.0%	27.5%	72.5%
Jobs lost	32 365		

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 85 and 89.

In terms of job status, women lost 9,833 jobs in the categories carrying higher status: professional/technical and manager/civil servant, in contrast with men, who lost such jobs as shopkeeper/sales and service jobs, while they gained ground in the professional/technical category. In the manager/civil servant category both women and men lost jobs, but women did so to a greater extent (table 11.24).

Table 11.24

NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE INCREASES IN NEW JOBS BY MAIN OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AND SEX, 1994-1995

	Prof./ tech.	Manager/ Civil serv.	Pers. asst.	Shop/ sales	Serv.	Agric.	Non-agric.	Total
Men	13 653	-9 833	6 445	-14 867	-8 207	10 319	33 868	45 432
Rate	2.9%	-9.2%	1.6%	-1.5%	-1.8%	10.2%	1.6%	27.5%
Women	20 213	-7 384	19 619	37 344	44 677	479	37 386	120 066
Rate	-2.4%	-13.4%	3.6%	5.4%	4.4%	3.5%	7.0%	72.5%
Total	3 440	-17 217	26 064	22 477	36 470	10 798	71 314	165 498
Rate	0.4%	-10.7%	2.8%	1.4%	2.5%	9.4%	2.6%	100.0%

Source: Based on ENH, stages 85 and 89.

Lastly, the inter-group figures for the loss of jobs are striking in the case of women in agriculture and mining, where they accounted for 40 and 82 per cent respectively of the jobs lost between 1994 and 1995.

Educational qualifications of the urban employed population

The population's education standards have been rising as a result of the education policies formulated since the 1970s with a view to increasing the cover (see the section on article 10).

However, the rapid increase in the cover of formal education has not been matched by its quality, and this has a particular impact on the employment prospects of young people and women. The education system is producing equally large contingents of male and female graduates from secondary school, and they are competing more and more fiercely for the few university places and/or for jobs for which they have insufficient qualifications; at the same time the education and production systems remain traditionally separated, a situation which affects the capacity to compete, especially in the economic sectors linked to international trade.

In the context of Colombia's integration in the globalization of markets by means of economic liberalization, we are witnessing the coexistence of a highly productive and developed economy, characterized by the intensive use of capital and sophisticated technology, side-by-side with an extensive production sector based on traditional techniques and having little capacity to secure changes in the organization of work and in production. It is accordingly essential to promote the training of Colombians to be producers.

The educational qualifications of the population employed in the urban sectors have shown a substantial improvement in terms of the proportion of workers with basic and secondary education (about 78 per cent). Almost a half of the male and female employed population has secondary education; a third of urban workers have some level of primary education, and about a fifth (17 per cent of men and 21 per cent of women) have post-secondary education (table 11.25).

Table 11.25
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND BY SEX, 1993-1995
(percentages)

	1995		1993		1994	
LEVEL	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
None	1.8	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.0	2.7
Primary	30.9	28.1	31.7	27.9	30.4	26.6
Secondary	48.3	48.2	48.4	48.2	49.7	49.0
Higher	18.4	21.0	17.4	21.3	17.4	21.3

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89 for 1993, 1994 and 1995.

With regard to the educational qualifications of the population employed in the new jobs generated between 1994 and 1995, the categories of services, shopkeeper/sales, and non-agricultural worker account for 92 per cent of the new workers having no educational qualifications or with only primary education. Ninety-four per cent of the urban labour force having secondary education is employed in those jobs or as administrative assistants. At the other extreme there are the more dynamic jobs requiring qualified staff and higher levels of education: professional/technical, administrative assistant and shopkeeper/sales, which account for 81 per cent of workers with higher levels of education (table 11.26).

Table 11.26
EMPLOYED URBAN POPULATION BY MAIN OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 1995
(percentages)

LEVEL	PROF/ TECH	MANAGER/ CIVIL SERVANT	ADMIN. ASST.	SERVICES	SHOP/ SALES	AGRIC.	NON-AGRIC.
None	0.3	-	0.9	39.6	6.7	24.9	25.2
Primary	0.6	0.4	2.1	27.7	2.6	20.7	43.8
Secondary	3.4	0.8	15.0	17.7	0.9	22.7	38.6
Higher	47.5	6.6	19.7	3.5	0.9	13.7	8.2

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

The relationship between access to jobs and levels of education between 1994 and 1995 (table 11.27) illustrates the unequal conditions which women have to cope with when they seek work. Although it seems incredible, the cultural capital represented by several years of schooling has a negative impact on the ability to obtain a job, or at least it does not lead to equitable job placement. It is significant that women with secondary and higher education have been more successful in obtaining jobs in categories which are lower in status and remuneration than their education warrants.

In the category of manager/civil servant the loss of jobs affected men and women with high levels of education owing in part to the adjustments carried out under the policies designed to modernize the State by cutting back the State apparatus.

Table 11.27
NUMBERS OF WOMEN EMPLOYED IN THE NEW JOBS GENERATED IN 1995 BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

EDUC. LEVEL	PROF/ TECH	MAN/ CIVIL SERVANT	ADMIN. ASST.	SHOP/ SALES	SERVICES	AGRIC.	NON-AGRIC.
NONE	-1 637		-541	3 271	13 253	-715	-530
Rate %	-45.4%		-100%	17.7%	25.1%	-70.4%	9.0%
Primary	-3 793	-175	-5 686	7 137	-18 533	-807	12 186
Rate %	-5.5%	-6.4%	-29.8%	3.9%	-3.5%	-12.9%	7.2%
Secondary	-4 939	-75	4 557	16 981	44 493	436	24 277
Rate %	-1.4%	-0.8%	1.3%	4.2%	11.1%	8.0%	7.37%
Higher	156	-7 134	21 221	7 862	4 564	1 565	599
Rate %	20.3%	-16.9%	12.2%	9.9%	19.4%	134.9%	2.3%
Total	-10 213	-7 384	19 619	37 344	44 677	479	37 386
Rate %	-2.4%	-13.4%	3.6%	5.4%	4.4%	3.5%	7.0%

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

Incomes

One of the most pertinent aspects of the employment problem is the inequality suffered by women in terms of remuneration for their work. The data indicate the persistence of a wages gap of about 30 per cent between men and women doing the same or comparable work, under identical conditions, although this shameful differential is clearly in a downward trend.[48]

The information for 1993-1995 shows not only that women are represented in greater numbers than men in the lower monthly-income ranges (below two minimum wages) but also that this trend is increasing. Thus, between 1993 and 1995 (table 11.28) the number of women earning less than two minimum wages rose from 67 to 71 per cent. During the period under study more than 82 per cent of women earned a maximum of three minimum wages. On the other hand, in the highest salary range (incomes in excess of five minimum monthly wages), although the proportion of women rose from 3.6 to 4.3 per cent in 1995, these percentages are lower than the figures for men for the same years (7% and 8%).

A breakdown of the information by income range shows that the proportion of workers with no income increased approximately by a factor of three for men and a factor of 11 for women.

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[48] On the gap between the incomes of men and women, see: Myriam Zúñiga. "La capacitación para el trabajo: una herramienta clave para la autorrealización de las mujeres de los sectores populares". In Memorias del Foro Formación para el Trabajo Frente al Reto de la Apertura. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1994. And Hugo López., "Desempleo femenino y empleos de tiempo parcial". Consultancy report for DNP.

Table 11.28

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MONTHLY INCOME AND BY SEX, 1993-1995

(intra-group percentages)

	1993		1994		1995	
Income range	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
None	0.2	0.2	0.9	2.7	0.7	2.2
<0.5 m.w.	4.2	9.9	3.9	7.7	3.5	9.0
0.5 to <1	14.6	21.9	11.9	19.6	12.3	20.7
1 to <2	35.5	35.3	37.9	39.1	40.5	39.1
2 to <3	11.2	8.9	15.0	10.9	15.5	11.5
3 to <5	9.6	6.7	11.0	7.6	8.3	5.7
5 to <8	3.7	2.0	4.4	3.3	4.4	2.8
8 to <10	1.4	0.6	1.3	0.7	1.1	0.6
10 and more	2.1	1.0	3.2	1.2	2.5	0.9

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

In the case of persons with incomes below half a minimum wage, there was a decline for both sexes: men from 4.2 to 3.5 per cent, and women from 9.9 to 9.0 per cent. But a comparison of these percentages shows women outnumbering men by two to one in this range.

Furthermore, although the range between a half and one minimum wage also shows a decline in the total number of urban workers, women outnumber men in this range by about 8 per cent.

Between one and two minimum wages the proportions of men and women are similar: between 35 and 41 per cent of the labour force.

Between five and 10 or more minimum wages there are two men for every woman.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the data on incomes in 1995 by job category and sex (table 11.29):

* Women earn lower wages in the non-agricultural, shopkeeper/sales and services categories. In fact, these three categories include 92.8 per cent of unpaid female family workers, 94.7 per cent of female workers with monthly incomes below half the minimum legal wage, 88.3 per cent of women with incomes between half and one minimum wage, and almost 62 per cent of women with incomes of one to two minimum wages. The five to 10 minimum wages range accommodates only a third of women workers. Similarly, there are between three and six times more women than men in the <0.5 to 2 minimum wage range in the services category.

* Men earn their lowest wages in the services, shopkeeper/sales and non-agricultural categories, in similar proportions as for women.

* The jobs which provide the highest incomes (over five minimum wages) are

/...

professional/technical and shopkeeper/sales; these categories account for 60.9 per cent of men with incomes between five and eight minimum wages and for 66.5 per cent of men with incomes above 10 minimum wages. The situation is similar for women.

Table 11.29
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAIN JOB GROUP AND MONTHLY INCOME, AND BY SEX, 1995

Monthly income	Professional/ technical		Manager/ civil servant		Administrative assistant		Shopkeeper/ Sales	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
None	4.6	3.0	2.4	---	2.5	2.8	53.8	61.6
<0.5 m.w.	4.1	2.2	---	---	5.3	2.4	27.0	22.1
0.5 to <1	2.6	3.4	0.1	0.08	8.9	7.7	22.3	21.3
1 to <2	3.0	6.3	0.2	0.3	9.2	21.2	17.5	19.6
2 to <3	9.6	26.5	1.5	1.7	10.1	31.5	17.2	17.3
3 to <5	22.2	41.5	5.0	5.9	8.1	18.2	21.2	18.5
5 to <8	40.4	49.0	6.8	8.3	6.0	11.7	20.5	17.6
8 to <10	45.2	47.7	10.0	13.2	3.0	5.6	16.3	21.3
10 & more	45.7	43.8	16.5	14.8	1.8	4.6	20.8	24.0

Table 11.30
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAIN JOB GROUP AND MONTHLY INCOME, AND BY SEX, 1995

Monthly income	Services		Agricultural		Non-agricultural	
	M	W	M	W	M	W
None	4.9	11.6	5.4	0.4	25.3	19.6
<0.5 m.w.	7.9	49.6	4.1	0.5	46.4	23.0
0.5 to <1	11.6	46.9	4.0	0.3	45.6	20.1
1 to <2	11.7	32.3	1.9	0.4	54.4	9.8
2 to <3	9.7	15.4	1.0	0.1	50.6	7.6
3 to <5	7.2	8.7	1.1	0.3	34.9	7.0
5 to <8	3.2	8.8	2.9	1.0	20.9	3.6
8 to <10	3.9	9.2	5.7	-	16.0	3.0

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

WOMEN AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The larger numbers of women in the labour market imply a higher female unemployment rate owing to the imbalance between the supply and demand for jobs. The supply cannot absorb the labour available in the market.[49]

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[49] Hugo López, "Educación, Formación para el Trabajo y Empleo". In Memorias del Foro Competitividad, Desarrollo Tecnológico y Formación para el Trabajo. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

This phenomenon increased between 1993 and 1995 from 7.75 to 9.37 per cent (table 11.31).

Generally speaking, there are two main types of unemployment in terms of the complexity of the vacancy requirements and the time spent by unemployed persons and/or job seekers looking for work: structural and frictional. In 1994 some 61 per cent of unemployed persons fell in the first category and 39 per cent in the second. This factor exacerbates the urban unemployment picture, since it means that 61 out of every 100 job applicants do not match the vacancy profiles.

Unemployment by sex and age

Unemployment is a phenomenon which, in the current economic recession, affects the whole population in all sectors of the economy; but, as pointed out earlier, it affects women and young people with particular force. They suffer higher rates of urban unemployment: almost two thirds of the unemployed in the seven main towns are women.

Furthermore, a comparison of young people of both sexes (12-29 age group) shows that unemployment is about 1.5 times higher for women than for men. This seems to corroborate the argument that women enter the labour market to take up the slack, generally in periods of economic expansion, and they are also the most seriously affected group when crises arise.[50]

Lastly, another factor which cannot be disregarded is that, to the extent that unemployment affects young people in the towns, it has a potential to generate graver problems such as crime, drug addiction and lack of security.

Table 11.31
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, 1993-1995

	Unemployment rate		
Age Range	1993	1994	1995
TOTAL	7.75	8.15	9.3
12-14	14.82	15.91	16.07
15-19	20.95	20.78	22.89
20-29	10.71	11.54	13.41
30-39	5.38	5.86	6.90
40-49	3.47	3.92	4.69
50-59	2.71	3.44	3.70
60-69	3.85	3.21	4.19
70-79	1.29	1.90	2.05

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[50] Myriam Zúñiga. Op. cit.

MEN	5.32	5.51	7.12
12-14	14.64	14.18	14.78
15-19	17.38	16.70	20.61
20-29	7.26	7.47	10.05
30-39	2.89	3.41	4.34
40-49	2.45	3.45	4.05
50-59	2.54	2.85	3.75
60-69	4.35	2.92	4.94
70-79	1.01	2.53	2.62
WOMEN	10.95	11.74	12.38
12-14	15.15	19.44	18.22
15-19	25.14	25.33	25.56
20-29	14.61	16.24	17.28
30-39	8.36	8.95	10.01
40-49	4.92	4.65	5.65
50-59	3.07	4.68	3.62
60-69	2.32	4.10	2.25
70-79	2.26	-	-

Source: DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

In terms of the age the unemployed, the most seriously affected are young people, especially in the 15-19 group, where the unemployment rates are above 25 percent, and young men and women in the 20-29 group, in which women have an unemployment rate of over 16 per cent.

Female unemployment rates have traditionally been higher than those of men, an indicator of possible discrimination against women in access to jobs. If women and men received the same treatment in the labour market, the rate reported in March 1985 would have been 4.11 per cent lower.[51] In 1995 the rate was 10.1 per cent.

Women account for most of the unemployed urban population. In 1956, 56 per cent of all unemployed persons and/or job seekers were women, but the trend was favourable during the period 1993-1995 (table 11.32).

Table 11.32
UNEMPLOYED POPULATION BY SEX, 1993-1995

YEAR	UNEMPLOYED	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
1993	407 786	158 805	38.9	248 981	61.1
1994	706 380	275 529	39.0	430 851	61.0
1995	839 556	365 598	43.6	473 958	56.5

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

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[51] Jaime Tenjo. Diferencias de ingresos y acceso al empleo entre hombres y mujeres. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1996.

Unemployment by level of education

In the current conditions of expansion of the education cover and globalization of the economy, the labour market demands not only applicants who have attended school for longer but also better-qualified applicants; it is not therefore surprising that unemployment affects persons with many years of schooling but poor work qualifications, as in the case of boys and girls graduating from secondary school. The imbalance between the education system, which every year adds to the army of such graduates, and the production system closes the door to thousands of young people competing for a small number of jobs; they are thus the most vulnerable group and require greater support in the search for real and productive jobs. The composition of the unemployed female population by level of education shows that between 1993 and 1995 the number of unemployed women with secondary or higher education rose from 76 to 80 per cent. The unemployment rate for men with the same level of education was about 72 per cent (table 11.33).

Table 11.33
UNEMPLOYED POPULATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND SEX, 1993-1995

	1993		1994		1995	
EDUC. LEVEL	M	W	M	W	M	W
None	1.3	0.9	2.1	1.7	1.5	0.7
Primary	26.4	22.8	27.8	20.2	26.0	18.9
Secondary	56.6	61.7	54.7	62.0	56.7	62.8
Higher	15.3	14.4	15.3	16.0	15.6	17.4

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

Unemployment by main job group sought

The job groups with the greatest demand for labour are non-agricultural worker, shopkeeper/sales, administrative assistant and services, which take up almost 90 per cent of the demand, confirming that the structural unemployment manifests itself in a supply of poorly paid jobs which is greater than the demand for jobs requiring qualifications (table 11.34).

The tendency is for women to seek jobs carrying lower status and social recognition: shopkeeper/sales, services, administrative assistant and non-agricultural worker.

According to the SENA jobs information service, the employers' needs are for professional/technical staff, administrators, sales staff and operatives.[52]

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[52] Fernando Vargas, "Desempleo Juvenil, Educación y Capacitación. Un enfoque desde los servicios públicos de empleo". In Memorias del Foro Competitividad, Desarrollo Tecnológico y Formación para el Trabajo. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

Table 11.34
TOTAL UNEMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAIN JOB GROUP SOUGHT, 1993-1995

YEAR	Prof./ Tech.	Manager/ civil servant	Admin. asst.	Shop/ Sales	Services	Agric.	Non-agric.
1993	7.3	0.7	20.2	22.5	8.6	1.4	29.4
1994	7.1	0.4	23.1	21.2	18.1	0.8	29.4
1995	6.7	0.9	23.4	20.9	17.2	0.7	28.9

Source: Based on DANE-ENH, stages 81, 85 and 89.

This generates a vicious circle which manifests itself in poor qualifications and few job opportunities, and therefore low earnings. The figures of the SENA jobs information service for April 1995 show that 86 per cent of the persons registering were seeking jobs which do not pay more than two legal minimum wages (table 11.35).

Table 11.35
REGISTRATIONS-VACANCIES-PLACEMENTS AND DETAILS OF
REMUNERATION, JANUARY-APRIL 1995

Income	Registrations	%	Vacancies	%	Placements	%
Total	38 158		27 369		6 449	
1 m.w.	22 761	59.6	8 583	31.4	3 320	51.5
1.1 - 2	10 102	26.5	13 238	48.4	2 434	37.7
2.1 - 3	3 347	8.8	3 936	14.4	523	8.1
3.1 - 4	873	2.3	873	3.2	85	1.3
> 4	1 075	2.8	741	2.7	87	1.3

Source: SENA jobs information service (except San Andrés, Quibdó and Valledupar).

MEASURES TO HELP URBAN WOMEN[53]

Colombia has an advanced constitutional and legal framework with respect to equality of opportunity in employment and protection of women workers, in accordance with its commitments under various treaties and conventions.

The 1991 Constitution posits work as right and a social obligation, so that every person has the possibility of exercising this right on decent and just terms (art. 25); it establishes equality of rights and opportunities for men and women and stipulates that women shall not be subjected to any kind of discrimination. It also asserts equality of opportunity for workers and states a series of principles of equality: remuneration in proportion to the quantity and quality of the work done; job security; guarantees of social security, training and leave; special protection for women, motherhood and children and young workers (art. 53); and it provides specific support for women heads of household (art. 43).

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[53] For rural women, see the section of this report on article 14.

In order to give effect to these constitutional provisions, regulations have been adopted and resources allocated for the protection of women; these include Law 11 of 1988, which establishes a special social security scheme for women domestic workers, and Law 50 of 1990, which assists pregnant women by providing for maternity leave and protection against dismissal.

In another sphere, the recourse of tutela has helped to establish rights closely connected with respect for equality of treatment with respect to competitive examinations for recruitment to jobs, enhancement of the status of domestic work, the right to health, and the protection of workers. Successive Governments have drawn up specific programmes to create jobs and incomes for women.

The present Government, in addition to implementing some of these programmes, has sought to incorporate women's needs in the national employment plans as such, in accordance with the strategies contained in the National Development Plan 1994-1998: the Social Leap Forward.

This National Plan regards employment as a fundamental link between social and economic development. In fact, the harmful effects of unemployment and underemployment and the precariousness of the employment of vast sectors of the population, in particular young people and women, constitute one of the biggest obstacles to the achievement of social development with equity. Today various agencies are carrying out measures to improve, within their own terms of reference, the job opportunities of urban women.

Colombia's job creation strategies used to be focused on the achievement of global macroeconomic targets which, although they did not discriminate against women, set targets for women's employment in only a few programmes. It has now become a goal of the Ministry of Employment and the National Office for Equality for Women to include specific targets for women in the job creation programmes. Both these bodies are seeking to involve a larger number of women in the programmes on terms of equality with respect to access and remuneration.

The programmes include:

* Plan for supporting small and medium-sized businesses of the Ministry of Development in coordination with other public and private agencies. This plan reflects the recognition of the importance of this sector in the national economy, since it employs 26 per cent of wage-earners, 93 per cent of independent workers, and a third of employers. Its purpose is therefore to promote and support small and medium-sized producers by means of credit facilities and access to production technologies, and it has the specific target of creating 500,000 jobs for women.

* Plan of the Ministry of the Interior for developing the mutual-support sector. This plan focuses on the integration of small producers with mutual-support enterprises; a start has been made on revision of the objectives and scope of the relevant administrative structure. There are no specific targets for women.

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* Pension support fund of the Ministry of Employment. The intention is to publicize the existence of the fund. For 1996 the target was 750,000 women members, but it must be pointed out that the enrolment system has encountered a number of difficulties.

* Emergency urban job creation programme of the Social Support Network. This programme is aimed at poor women in urban areas and has a target of placing women in 30 per cent of all the jobs created.

* Job training programme of the Social Support Network and SENA. This programme provides maintenance grants of 50,000 pesos a month (1994 prices). In 1995 30 per cent of the 21,209 beneficiaries were women, and this figure was increased to a target of 40 per cent of the 123,000 maintenance grants planned for 1996.

* Development programme for families headed by women of the National Office for Equality for Women. This programme was initiated in 1992 by the Presidential Council on Youth, Women and the Family and is currently funded by the Social Support Network and the Foundation for Higher Education; it is implemented by 26 NGOs coordinated by the National Office. The aim is to improve the living standards of women heads of household and their nuclear families by supporting loans and training for independent economic activities. It is thus hoped that the women will stabilize their incomes, improve their circumstances and take up economic activities, and that they will have access to basic social services. The programme covers 24 towns and provided support for 54,500 beneficiaries in 1992-1995. In 1996 it expanded its cover with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank (see the section of this report on article 13).

* Other programmes (see the section of this report on article 13).

The following complementary activities are also being carried out:

* Publicizing the regulations. This is being done by means of campaigns run by the Ministry of Employment and other agencies; the emphasis has been on the dissemination of Law 100 on health and social security and of the legislation regulating the pension support fund, domestic service, child labour, sexual harassment in the workplace and, of course, violence in the family; the new labour protection laws are also being publicized.

* Creation of integrated human development centres for women in the informal urban sector.

* Training of civil servants. This training is for men and women in the Ministry of Employment and focuses on gender analysis and equality for women. It has a target of 300 persons.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES OF URBAN WOMEN WITH RESPECT TO EMPLOYMENT

Women have made significant progress in their participation in urban employment in a context of tertiarization and globalization of the economy and of inequality with respect to men; however, they still suffer under the conditions which channel them to jobs and branches of activity carrying less socio-economic recognition, lower incomes and less job security.

In this context, the following points summarize the situation of urban women:

* The economic adjustment processes manifest themselves in a decline in the number of women in the economically active population and in the employed population, with the consequent loss of some of the employment gains made in previous years.

* The employment of women by branch of activity still suffers from stereotypes determining women's employment on the basis of sex.

* Women have unequal access to the traditionally male branches such as agriculture, mining, electricity/gas/water, transport and construction, but they constitute a greater proportion of the labour force in services (57.5%).

* The participation of women by job status shows that they are at a disadvantage: their participation is greater and growing in undervalued jobs such as unpaid worker and domestic worker. Similarly, there is an increase in the number of women working on their own account, the principal component of the informal sector, and a decline in the proportion of women in the private-sector worker/employee category, where there is relative job security.

* More women than men are taking the new jobs, but the quality of the jobs taken by women is not improving.

* Where incomes are concerned, women make up the lowest-paid group and their tendency to belong to this group is increasing.

* The proportion of women in the economically inactive population is constant at about 70 per cent, since this population includes a large number of people working from home, or simply working in the home and thus contributing to the survival of the nuclear family.

* Employed women have significantly higher educational standards, but this is not reflected in gains in terms of employment, for women with secondary and higher education take low-paid jobs.

* The employment situation led to an increase in poverty measured by the real purchasing power of incomes, although poverty measured by unsatisfied basic needs declined.

* Colombia is making progress with respect to legislation in favour of working women, but an additional effort is required from the State to publicize the legislation among women workers and employers and to establish machinery for monitoring and controlling its application. The gap between the theoretical situation and the actual practice is manifest in the difficulties suffered by pregnant women, in women's limited access to better-paid jobs, and in the persistence of the wage differentials between men and women.

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* The national employment policies do not allow any discrimination against women but nor do they set targets for integrating women or facilitating their productive work by taking into account their reproductive functions. The employment programmes for women are concerned basically with women heads of household and their cover is not very extensive.

* SENA is carrying out a review from the gender standpoint of the training which it provides.

* Cultural factors rooted in the division of labour by sex continue to impose a double working day on women workers.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Article 12

> "1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.
>
> 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation."

DEATH RATE

Overall death rate

In Colombia life expectancy at birth has always been higher for women than for men. In 1995 it was estimated that female life expectancy was 72.3 years and male 66.4 years. These figures have shown a significant and constant improvement over the past four years: in 1955 women's life expectancy at birth was 52.3 years and men's 49 years; in 1965 the rates were 61.8 years for women and 58.3 years for men; in 1975, 66.3 years for women and 61.8 years for men; and in 1985, 71.1 years for women and 65.5 years for men.

In 1991 the overall death rate in Colombia was 4.9 per 1,000 inhabitants for women and 5.6 for men. In that year cardiovascular diseases were the primary cause of death, followed very closely by violent or accidental death. This situation was reversed in 1994, when murder and deliberate bodily harm moved up to first place.

Broken down by sex, the primary cause of death among women in 1994 was acute myocardial infarction; for men it was murder and deliberate bodily harm. However, when this aspect is analyzed by age group, for women aged 15 to 44 first place is taken by murder and deliberate bodily harm, second place by traffic accidents, and third by cerebrovascular diseases. In this age group and in the 45-55 age group cervical cancer and breast cancer occupy sixth and seventh places respectively.

Table 12.1
NUMBER OF FEMALE DEATHS IN 1994 BY CAUSE AND AGE GROUP

Age	<1	1 to 4	5 to 14	15 to 44	46 to 59	>60	No info.	Total
Heart attack	0	0	8	319	1649	5234	210	7420
Cerebrovascular	7	5	16	430	1434	4509	166	6587
Other heart diseases	38	22	31	319	739	3069	104	4322
Malignant tumour	8	30	43	306	1061	1653	51	3152
Hypertension	1	1	7	137	496	2149	69	2860
Respir. system	64	29	15	125	438	1894	52	2417
Diabetes	2	0	8	153	857	1502	50	2372
Pneumonia	432	198	63	165	195	1165	56	2274
Murder & bodily harm	10	25	91	1503	222	47	59	1957
Stomach tumour	0	0	0	122	462	1025	28	1637

Source: Ministry of Health, Systems and Information Office.

Maternal mortality

According to the information of the Ministry of Health, the structure of maternal mortality has remained relatively stable. However, many deaths are not registered and the figures do not include the contribution of abortion, which is thought to be very large. In 1994 the primary cause of maternal death was toxaemia, followed by abortion, haemorrhages, labour or childbirth complications, etc. In 1977 there were 192 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births; by 1987 this figure had fallen to 116.76; in 1990 it was 97.94 and in 1994 it fell to 78.20. There was thus a reduction of 35 per cent between 1986 and 1994 (table 12.2).

MORBIDITY

In 1994 the main causes of hospitalization of women were connected with childbirth and pregnancy complications, the same situation as in 1987. These causes of hospitalization were followed in importance by diseases of the genital organs, pneumonia, bilious attacks and enteritis, and other diarrhoeal ailments.

An analysis of the causes of hospitalization by age group shows that in 1994 pneumonia was the leading cause for children aged under 14, pregnancy and childbirth complications for the 15-44 age group, diseases of the genital organs for the 45-59 age group, and heart and circulatory diseases for women aged over 60.

In 1994 the leading cause of outpatient visits by women was dental problems, followed by diseases of the genital organs, acute respiratory infections, skin and subcutaneous problems, and hypertension.

Broken down by age group, in 1994 the principal reason for outpatient consultations for girls aged under 14 was acute respiratory infections; for women aged 14 to 44, diseases of the genital organs; and for women aged 45 to 59 and over 60, hypertension.

ABORTION

Legal aspects

The legal status of abortion has not changed in the 1990s. It is still punished as an illegal act carrying a penalty of imprisonment for between one and three years, both for the woman concerned and for the doctor who performs the abortion.

In 1994 an appeal was lodged with the Constitutional Court against the provision of the Criminal Code criminalizing abortion on the ground that, among other considerations, the provision violated the right to freedom of opinion, the right to free development of the personality, the freedom of belief, the freedom of religion, and the right freely and responsibly to decide on the number of one's children.

In its decision C-133 of 1994 the Constitutional Court confirmed the constitutionality of the contested provision on the basis of the obligation of the State to protect the right to life which, in the Court's opinion, includes the right to life of the human being yet to be born, since human life begins at the moment of conception. Accordingly, the constitutional right freely and responsibly to decide on the number of children "should be understood in the sense that the couple may exercise it only up to the moment of conception", since the inviolability of human life requires that it should be protected from the beginning of the gestation process.

However, the Court's decision was not unanimous, and three of the nine judges dissented on the ground, amongst others, that recognition of the fundamental rights of a being who does not yet possess the legal status of person may limit the rights of individuals, in particular those of pregnant women. For the judges who dissented from the majority decision, the constitutional problem of abortion does not turn on the legal status of the being yet to be born but on the limits to the capacity of the State to impose a given concept of human life. These limits cannot be extended to the point of interfering with the exercise of the fundamental right to freedom of belief or to women's right to reproductive independence, which would be impaired by "...the obligation to bear a child - enforced by the criminalization of abortion - [which] imposes a disproportionate burden on women". In addition, for some women this burden constitutes a violation of their right to equality of opportunity.

Incidence

Since abortion is illegal, there are no official national figures on its incidence, except for hospital records, which are an unreliable source of information owing to under-registration, incorrect classification, etc.

The most systematic information available at present is provided by the results of research carried out by the Extramural University of Colombia, which were published in 1994.[54] The information and figures produced by this research were based on a sample of 33,375 women surveyed in 22 towns in Colombia, 100 life-histories of women with experience of induced abortion, and 180 thematic reports on abortion.

The following considerations are based on the figures and conclusions of this research:

* Total proportion. According to the research findings, 22.9 per cent of the women surveyed aged between 15 and 55 had had at least one experience of abortion.

* Proportion among women who have been pregnant. When the calculation was restricted to women who had had at least one pregnancy, who accounted for 75.4 per cent of the sample (and of course excluding women who had not begun to engage in sex), the proportion of women who had had an abortion at some time rose to 30.3 per cent.

* Incidence by age. 26.5 per cent of women have already had a pregnancy by the age of 20. This proportion rises to 82 per cent by age 25. According to the research, the risk of abortion is much higher for younger women: pregnant women aged under 19 are twice as likely to have an abortion as women aged over 40; of the women aged under 19 who have had a pregnancy, 44.5 per cent have had at least one experience of abortion. Among women aged 20 to 24 the rate is 32.4 per cent, and among women aged 45 to 50 it is 22.5 per cent.

* Incidence by social stratum. A comparison of the abortion rate with social background indicates that abortion is commoner higher up the social scale, although there are more pregnancies at the lower end, where contraception is less common. Furthermore, it is in the lower social strata that most pregnancies terminate in births.

* Incidence by education. There is certainly a connection between the abortion rate and level of education: women with university education are the most likely to have an abortion, because although they are more likely to practise birth-control their decision not to have children at a given time is clearer, and a failure of contraception tends to be corrected by an abortion.

* Incidence by number of pregnancies. The incidence of abortion varies significantly according to the number of pregnancies: the lowest figure for women who have had an abortion is found in the group which has had up to two pregnancies (22.9 per cent), and this figure is doubled for women who have had five or six pregnancies. On average, for each additional pregnancy the number of abortions increases by a factor of 1.5.

* Evolution of abortion rate. The research findings show a clear generational increase in the abortion rate: women in the 15-20 age group have twice as many abortions as women born in the 1960s and 1970s: 2.2 against

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[54] Lucero Zamudio, N. Rubiano and L. Wartenburg. Memorias del Encuentro de investigadores sobre aborto inducido en América Latina y el Caribe. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Universidad Externado de Columbia, 5-18 November, 1994.

4.28 per cent. In the 18-19 age group the proportion quadruples to 8.16 per cent from 2.04 per cent.

* Repetition. 79.2 per cent of women who have aborted state that they have had only one abortion; 16.2 per cent, two abortions; 3.4 per cent, three abortions; and only 1.2 per cent, four or more abortions. However, the research illustrates the difficulty of measuring the repetition of abortion, since women are often ashamed to say that they have had more than two. The most significant variations are found between women who have had seven or more pregnancies, 51.1 per cent of whom have had more than one abortion, and women who have had up to two pregnancies, whose repetition rate is 11.1 per cent.

* Average number of abortions per woman. The average number of abortions per woman who has been pregnant at some time is 0.29. This figure rises to 1.27 for women who have had an abortion at some time.

* Impact of abortion on lower fertility rate. Since the average number of children per woman in the urban sector is 1.9 and the average number of abortions is 0.29, it is calculated that abortions reduced the number of births at the time of the study by 13.3 per cent. Without that reduction, the average number of children per woman in the urban sector would have been 2.2.

FERTILITY

In 1995, Colombia's population was calculated at 35,098,737, including 17,701,974 females and 17,936,762 males. It is estimated that by 2000 the population will total 37,816,293, including 19,087,444 females and 18,728,849 males.[55]

According to the 1993 census, the population growth rate in 1990-1995 was 22 per 1,000. In 1985 it was 29 per 1,000.

Fertility rates have fallen steadily in Colombia since the 1960s. According to the findings of the 1995 PROFAMILIA National Survey of Demography and Health, the fertility rate fell by almost 23 per cent over the past 15 years and by 14 per cent over the past 10 years. According to the data of the Ministry of Health, the total fertility rate for 1985-1990 was 2.9, and for 1990-1995 2.7. With respect to regional differences, the highest rate is found in the department of Chocó (Pacific Coast) with 4.3, and the lowest in Bogotá with 2.1.[56] If the current reproduction rates remain unchanged, women will have an average of three children during their fertile life, compared with an average of more than seven in the 1960s. With respect to differences of education and place of residence, if the present rates are maintained women with higher education will have two children, and women with no education will have more than five; and in rural areas women

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[55] Ministry of Health. La Salud en Colombia. Diez Años de Información. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Ministry of Health, 1994.

[56] Ibid.

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will have an average of almost two children more than women in urban areas.

Table 12.2

	1970-1975	1975-1980	1908-1985	1895-1990	1990-1995
Total fertility rate	4.7	4.1	3.5	3.1	2.9
Gross reproduction rate	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.4
Net reproduction rate	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.4

Source: National Planning Department. System of Socio-Demographic Indicators for Colombia. Boletín No. 2 - Demografía.

By age of the mother

Table 12.3 shows the fertility rates broken down by the age of the mother and her place of residence for 1993-1995.

Table 12.3
SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES, 1993-1995

	Specific fertility rate		
Mother's age	Urban	Rural	Total
15-19	74	137	89
20-24	150	245	173
25-29	135	190	148
30-34	91	132	101
35-39	41	95	56
40-45	11	58	24
45-49	1	5	2
Total			
TFT 15-49	2.5	4.3	3.0
TGF 15-49	92	150	107
TBN	25	30	26

TFT: total fertility rate
TGF: number of births to women aged 15-49
TBN: births divided by number of households surveyed

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

By level of education and place of residence

The fertility rate shows large differences according to the educational qualifications and place of residence of the mother. Extremely high fertility rates are still found among women with no education living in rural areas: on the Pacific Coast the total fertility rate is estimated at 5, and this figure rises to 7.1 in rural areas. This is double the number of children born to women with higher education living in the big towns or the central region of the country (table 12.4).

Table 12.4

FERTILITY RATE AND PERCENTAGES OF PREGNANT WOMEN, 1993-1995

	Total fertility rate			% Pregnant women
	Urban	Rural	Total	
Urban	2.5		2.5	4.7
Rural		4.3	4.3	7.6
Education				
None	3.9	5.6	5.0	5.1
Primary	3.3	4.5	3.8	6.1
Secondary	2.5	3.4	2.6	5.2
Higher	1.8	3.0	1.8	4.7
Total	2.5	4.3	3.0	5.5

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

Mother's age at birth of first child

The average age of the mother at the birth of her first child is 22 years: 23 years in urban areas and 21 in rural. This age rises with the level of education, from 19 for women with no education to 23 for those who have completed the secondary level.

Fertility of adolescents

Seventeen per cent of women aged 15-19 are mothers or are pregnant with their first child. At age 19, four out of every 10 women have already given birth and nine per cent of them have at least two children. In the Pacific Coast area the adolescent fertility rate is much higher: the number of young mothers is almost three times higher than in other areas.

At the time of the survey (1995) 3.10 per cent of adolescent girls were pregnant, compared with 16 per cent among the population at large. The highest proportion of pregnant women (11%) is found in the 20-24 age group (table 12.5).

Table 12.5

ADOLESCENT FERTILITY RATE, 1995

Age	Already mothers	First pregnancy	Total pregnant at some time
15	3.1	1.8	4.9
16	7.1	2.3	9.4
17	9.3	4.7	14.0
18	20.5	5.1	25.6
19	32.2	6.4	38.6
Urban	11.5	3.1	14.6
Rural	19.3	6.2	25.5
Education			
None/primary	25.4	4.5	29.9
Secondary	8.8	3.6	12.4
Higher	1.7	4.8	6.5
Total	13.5	3.9	17.4

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

Factors determining fertility

The factors determining fertility include marriage, exposure to the risk of pregnancy, natural postpartum infertility, reproductive preferences, and use of contraceptives.

Marriage rate and risk of pregnancy

Fifty-five per cent of all women aged 15 to 49 live in a conjugal union. Of this figure, 45 per cent have a de facto marriage. Half of the women who have had sexual relations at some time did so for the first time before the age of 20. Indeed, 50 per cent have their first child before that age.

Postpartum infertility

The period following childbirth when there is no risk of becoming pregnant is believed to be nine months on average. In fact, if the woman is breastfeeding there is natural protection for three to six months, but it is not totally effective.

Reproductive preferences

According to the findings of the survey, most women believe that the ideal number of children is two to three. During the five years before the survey (1990-1995) 21 per cent of births were unwanted and 25 per cent were wanted but the mothers would have preferred to have them later. If women could avoid unwanted children, the total fertility rate would fall by 27 per cent from 3 to 2.2 children.

FAMILY PLANNING

Legal aspects

Article 42 of the Constitution states: "A couple has the right freely and responsibly to decide on the number of their children...". This is the legal basis for the use of contraceptives, which are on sale and freely available.

On the other hand, with regard to methods of fertilization, the Constitutional Court (Decision T-341 of 27 July 1994) ruled that treatment designed to restore ovulatory functions for reproductive purposes constituted part of the medical services covered by the social security system. According to the Court, a failure to include reproduction among the medical services provided to men and women workers would constitute discrimination.

Knowledge of methods

According to the 1995 National Survey of Demography and Health,[57] knowledge of family planning methods is universal. Ninety-nine per cent of women who do not have sexual relations can name at least one modern contraceptive method, and 100 per cent of women living with a man, in both urban and rural areas, have knowledge of contraceptive methods.

The commonest method is the pill (98.1%), followed by condoms (97.6%) and female sterilization (96.6%). The least common methods are the "traditional" ones: withdrawal is known to 72.4 per cent of women, and the rhythm method to 80.1 per cent.

Use of contraception

- Use in the past. 92 per cent of sexually active women have used a method of family planning at some time. The commonest is the pill (58%), followed by intra-uterine devices (30%) and female sterilization (26%).

- Current use. At present 72 per cent of women living with a man and 74.9 per cent not living with a man but sexually active use some form of contraception. This figure has risen from 66 per cent in 1990 and 65 per cent in 1986. The most popular method is female sterilization, which was used by 18.8 per cent of women in 1986 and by 26.4 per cent in 1995. The pill and intra-uterine devices are next in importance with 13 and 11 per cent respectively, although their shares are declining. The use of traditional methods such as withdrawal and the rhythm method has remained almost constant since 1986 at about 11 per cent.

- Use by level of education. The use of contraception is directly related to education level: in the case of women living with a man, the most widespread use of contraception is found among those with higher education (77.1%). The commonest method is female sterilization (25.2%), and the least common are the vaginal methods: foams, jellies and diaphragms (0.7%) and male sterilization (0.8%). The use of contraceptives is least common among women with no education, only 58 per cent of whom have recourse to contraception; the commonest method is female sterilization (28.6%), and the least common are implants (0%), male sterilization (0.4%) and the vaginal methods (0.9%).

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[57] PROFAMILIA. Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1996.

Age at the time of sterilization

Since female sterilization is the most widely used method, it is worth pointing out that the average age of women at the time of this operation is 30.6 years. Of the women who have the operation, 13.6 per cent are aged under 25; 29.5 per cent, 25 to 29; 33.9 per cent, 30 to 34; 18 per cent, 35 to 39; 4.2 per cent, 40 to 44; and 0.8 per cent, 45 to 49.

Sources of supply

Contraceptives are supplied mainly by the private sector, which accounts for 72.1 per cent of contraceptive methods, compared with the 27.1 per cent supplied by the public sector (table 12.6).

Table 12.6
SOURCES OF SUPPLY FAMILY PLANNING METHODS, 1995

METHOD	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
Pill	4.6	94.6
IUD	45.1	54.8
Injections	1.6	97.4
Implants	2.6	97.4
Vaginal	0.0	98.6
Condoms	1.2	92.8
Female sterilization	40.4	59.4
Male sterilization	21.6	78.4
TOTAL	27.1	72.1

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

Demand for family planning services

The total demand, including both women living with a man and other women, comes from the following groups:

Women with unsatisfied family planning needs;

Women with satisfied needs (who use contraceptives);

Women who became pregnant while using a contraceptive method owing to its failure (tables 12.7 and 12.8).

Table 12.7
DEMAND FOR FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES FROM WOMEN NOT LIVING WITH A MAN, 1995

	Unsatisfied need	Satisfied need	Failure of methods	Total demand	Satisfied demand
Age					
15-19	1.0	4.8	0.7	6.4	84.5
20-24	2.2	17.9	1.3	21.5	89.8
25-29	0.8	27.8	1.6	30.2	97.4
30-34	1.9	32.6	1.7	36.1	94.9
35-39	1.0	34.1	0.9	35.9	97.3
40-44	1.6	35.4	0.2	37.3	95.8
45-49	1.5	29.3	0.0	30.8	95.0
Area					
Urban	1.3	20.6	0.9	22.8	94.3
Rural	1.6	11.9	1.2	14.7	88.8
Education					
None	1.0	26.8	0.0	27.8	96.3
Primary	1.5	19.5	1.1	22.1	93.2
Secondary	1.4	17.2	0.8	19.4	92.6
Higher	0.7	24.2	1.6	26.5	97.4
Total	1.4	18.9	0.9	21.2	93.6

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

Table 12.8
DEMAND FOR FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES FROM WOMEN LIVING WITH A MAN, 1995

	Unsatisfied need	Satisfied need	Failure of methods	Total demand	Satisfied demand
Age					
15-19	16.2	50.7	7.3	74.2	78.2
20-24	14.8	60.8	7.4	83.0	82.1
25-29	8.3	71.9	3.7	83.9	90.1
30-34	6.2	78.1	2.3	86.5	92.9
35-39	3.6	82.4	1.9	87.9	95.9
40-44	5.8	78.5	0.7	84.9	93.2
45-49	4.2	64.2	0.1	68.6	93.9
Area					
Urban	6.5	74.4	2.8	83.7	92.2
Rural	10.5	67.0	3.7	81.3	87.0

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Education					
None	13.1	58.0	2.6	73.7	82.2
Primary	9.2	70.4	2.8	82.3	88.9
Secondary	6.5	74.7	3.4	84.6	92.3
Higher	3.8	77.1	3.0	84.0	95.5
		72.2	3.1	83.0	90.7
Total	7.7	72.2	3.1	83.0	90.7

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

Of the total demand for family planning services, 83 per cent comes from women living with a man and 21.2 per cent from other women. The demand is highest in the first group in the 35-39 age range (87.9%) and in the 30-34 range (86.5%), while the demand is lowest among women aged 15-19 not living with a man (6.4%).

With respect to regional differences, the highest level of unsatisfied family planning needs is found among women in the Pacific Coast region: living with a man - 19.8 per cent; others - 3.7 per cent.

INFANT MORTALITY

Over the past 20 years Colombia's infant mortality rate has fallen by 48 per cent from 54 to 28 deaths per 1,000 live births. But the differences by place of residence remain significant: on the Pacific Coast the rate is 61 per 1,000, while in a chief town such as Medellín it is 18 per 1,000.

In the period 1990-1995 the infant mortality rate was 28 deaths per 1,000 live births; the neonatal rate was 19 per 1,000, double the post-neonatal rate of nine per 1,000; the rate in the 1-5 age group was eight deaths per 1,000 children (table 12.9).

Table 12.9
INFANT MORTALITY RATE PER 1,000, 1985-1995

	Neonatal	Post-neonatal	Infant	Post-infant	Deaths in childhood
Sex					
Boy	23	12	35	7	42
Girl	18	9	27	7	33
Mother's age					
<20	27	11	39	6	48
20-29	21	10	30	8	38
30-39	15	11	26	5	30
40-49	(29)	(8)	(37)	(0)	37

Order of births					
1st child	21	5	27	6	32
2nd or 3rd	21	10	31	6	36
4th to 6th	21	15	36	12	48
7th and higher	13	23	36	6	42
Birth interval					
<2 years	24	20	44	11	55
2-3 years	16	13	29	6	35
4+ years	20	7	26	4	30
Prenatal and delivery medical care					
None	(34)	(21)	(54)	NA	NA
Prenatal or delivery	23	22	44	NA	NA
Prenatal and delivery	16	6	22	NA	NA
Size at birth					
Very small	(53)	(13)	(65)	NA	NA
Small	10	8	18	NA	NA
Average or big	14	10	24	NA	NA
Total	21	10	31	7	37

Neonatal mortality: during the first month of life
Post-neonatal mortality: after the first month and before first birthday
Infant mortality: during the first year of life
Post-infant mortality: after the first year and before the fourth birthday
Child mortality: before the fifth birthday
NA: Not available
(): Rate based on fewer than 500 cases (persons at risk)

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

The neonatal or perinatal mortality rate is 30 per cent higher for boys than for girls. It is also higher in the case of mothers aged under 20 or over 40, and it increases with the numerical order of births and with shorter intervals between births. Lastly, the mortality rates are higher for children with low birth-weight (falling from 65 for small babies to 24 for average-sized or big ones) and for mothers receiving no perinatal or delivery care (falling from 54 to 22 for mothers who do receive such care).

By place of residence

All the rates are higher in rural areas than in urban ones: the neonatal rate is 25 per thousand in rural areas as against 18 per thousand in urban areas; the infant rates are 36 and 28 respectively, while the child mortality rates are 43 and 34 respectively.

A regional analysis shows that all the rates are higher on the Pacific Coast, where the neonatal rate is 47 per thousand, the infant rate 61, and the child rate 82. The lowest rates are found in the departments of Cundinamarca, Boyacá and Meta, with a neonatal rate of 11, an infant rate of

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16, and a child rate of 19.

By level of education

The lowest rates are found among the population with the highest level of education, with neonatal and infant rates of 7 and a child rate of 11, whereas for the population without education these rates are 16, 27 and 48 respectively.

High risk in childbirth

According to the National Survey, births taking place under one or more of the following circumstances are considered to be high-risk:

Mother aged under 18;

Mother aged over 34;

Interval between births less than 24 months;

Fourth or subsequent birth.

During the period 1990-1995 45 per cent of births were high-risk; two thirds had only one risk factor (31%), and the rest several risk factors (6%). Most of the births with only one risk factor are accounted for by intervals of less than two years (11%), when the risk is 50 per cent higher than when there is no risk factor. Most cases of combined risk are associated with the mother's age (over 35) and with a fourth or subsequent birth; the risk is 31 per cent greater than for women not falling in these categories.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Antenatal care

Between 1990 and 1995 almost 80 per cent of pregnant women received medical care; 17 per cent received no kind of care and 3 per cent received attention from nurses or midwives. However, these overall averages exhibit large differences when the variables are taken into account: in the case of place of residence, 29.2 per cent of pregnant women in rural areas did not receive any care, i.e. almost a third of the 87 per cent figure for women who did receive care in urban areas.

Where the regions are concerned, the Pacific coast had the biggest numbers of women receiving no medical care (37.7%), while in Bogotá 92.7 per cent of women did receive care.

In the case of level of education, 52.2 per cent of women without any education received no kind of antenatal care, while 98.2 per cent of women with higher education did receive care.

With regard to prevention of tetanus during childbirth, it was found that during their pregnancy 23.6 per cent of women received at least one dose

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of vaccine against toxoid tetanus and 56.5 per cent two or more doses. Nineteen per cent of pregnant women received no vaccine.

Care during delivery

According to the National Survey, in the period 1990-1995 almost 77 per cent of women who gave birth did so in health institutions and 23 per cent did so at home. The following table shows the variations in these percentages by mother's age, numerical order of the birth, place of residence and level of education.

Table 12.10
PERCENTAGES OF BIRTHS BY PLACE OF DELIVERY, 1995

	Place of delivery	
	Health institution	At home
Mother's age		
<20	77.2	22.0
20-34	78.2	21.3
35+	67.0	32.0
Order of birth		
1	89.3	10.3
1-3	78.4	21.2
4-5	63.3	35.8
6+	39.2	58.6
Urban areas	88.5	11.1
Rural areas	56.0	43.0
Education level		
None	40.5	57.6
Primary	64.2	34.9
Secondary	90.3	9.4
Higher	99.2	0.6
Prenatal checks		
None	38.5	60.0
1-3	65.1	34.2
4+	88.1	11.7
Total	76.8	22.6

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

Deliveries at home are much commoner in rural areas among women with no education and/or a history of more than five births. In regional terms, the highest proportion of births at home is found on the Pacific Coast (60.8%) and the lowest in Bogotá (4.4%), which also has the highest proportion of deliveries in a health institution, together with Medellín (94%) and Cali (93%).

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Weight and size at birth

For the period 1990-1995 64 per cent of mothers stated that their child weighed 2.5 kilos or more at birth, and 5 per cent that the weight had been below 2.5 kilos. However, 31 per cent of mothers did not record or had no information about their child's weight at birth. These figures exhibit significant variations by mother's age, numerical order of the birth, place of residence and level of education, as can be seen from table 12.11.

In a significantly high percentage of cases the mothers do not know their child's weight: 70 per cent of mothers with no education, 60 per cent on the Pacific Coast, and 50 per cent in rural areas.

With respect to the size at birth, 79 per cent of mothers stated that their child was of average size or bigger, 13 per cent smaller than average, and 8 per cent very small.

Table 12.11
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION BY ESTIMATED WEIGHT AND
SIZE AT BIRTH, 1995

	Weight at birth			Size at birth			
	Under 2.5k	2.5k or more	No info.	Very small	Smaller than average	Average or bigger	No info.
Mother's age							
15-19	3.7	62.2	34.1	8.4	14.1	76.7	0.9
20-34	4.6	65.4	30.0	6.9	11.9	80.2	1.0
35+	5.1	58.1	36.7	10.9	14.2	74.4	0.5
Order of birth							
1	5.8	72.6	21.7	7.3	14.4	77.6	0.8
1-3	3.8	65.6	30.7	7.0	11.4	80.7	0.9
4-5	4.6	54.6	40.8	8.0	11.5	80.1	0.4
6+	2.8	36.0	61.2	11.5	12.2	74.2	2.0
Urban areas	5.3	73.6	21.1	6.1	12.2	81.0	0.7
Rural areas	3.0	47.0	50.0	10.3	13.1	75.3	1.2
Education level							
None	2.6	27.3	70.1	12.2	14.4	71.8	1.5
Primary	3.6	51.4	45.0	9.2	13.4	76.3	1.1
Secondary	4.6	77.7	17.6	5.9	11.1	82.4	0.7
Higher	10.6	85.4	4.1	5.1	14.9	79.7	0.3
Total	4.5	64.0	31.5	7.6	12.5	79.0	0.9

Source: PROFAMILIA. National Survey of Demography and Health, 1995.

Vaccination

Vaccination of children aged under 12 months has increased significantly over the past five years: while in 1990 it was estimated that 43 per cent of children received the full set of vaccinations, the 1995 figure was 65 per cent. Complete vaccination is deemed to include tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus, and polio and measles.

According to 1995 data broken down by sex, the proportion of boys receiving all the vaccinations (68.7%) is slightly higher than that of girls (62%). There are also significant differences according to the mother's level of education: the numbers of boys and girls receiving all the vaccinations ranged from 47 per cent in the case of mothers with no education to 80.6 per cent in the case of mothers with higher education.

Respiratory ailments

The incidence of acute respiratory infections among children was higher in 1995 than in 1990, rising from 16 to 24 per cent. There were no important differences by sex, education level or place of residence.

Diarrhoea

The incidence of diarrhoea increased from 12 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent in 1995. The most important differences were determined by the age of the child, the numerical order of the birth, and the place of residence. The highest levels were found among children aged 6 to 23 months (26%), children born fourth or higher in order (21%), and children living in the Antioquia (23%), Atlántico (22%) and Pacific coast (21%) regions.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM AND HEALTH

Legal aspects

Colombia's social security system was changed in 1993 when the Congress approved Law 100, the reforming purpose of which was to regulate the provision of health services in order to ensure universal cover of the whole population at every level of care.

The Law set the target of enroling the whole population in the system by 2000.

Enrolment

The new social security system has two membership schemes:

* Membership under the contributory scheme. This includes persons employed under a labour contract, public servants, retirees and pensioners, and independent workers.

The contribution is a maximum of 12 per cent of salary; two thirds of the contribution is paid by the employer and one third by the worker. In order to support the funding of the subsidized scheme, one percentage point of the amounts paid under the contributory scheme is transferred to the Support and Guarantee Fund.

* Membership under the subsidized scheme. This is for poor persons who are unable to pay the full contribution. If they wish to join the social

security system under this scheme, they must meet certain requirements to the satisfaction of the health authorities.

According to Law 100, the subsidized scheme gives priority to the enrolment of pregnant women and of women in the delivery, postpartum and breastfeeding periods, community mothers,[59] women heads of family, children aged under 12 months, etc.

Mandatory minimum services

All members of the system, regardless of the scheme under which they are enrolled, have to choose the institution in which the services will be provided and they must receive the following kinds of care:

Services under the compulsory health plan;

Maternal and child care;

Emergency treatment.

Mandatory health plan

This plan consists of a number of minimum services which must be provided to all members of the social security system. In accordance with the target of universal membership set by law, it is hoped that by 2000 the whole population of Colombia will be enrolled in the system and be able to receive the services.

The mandatory health plan includes family cover, which means that the benefits of the system are available to the spouse or permanent companion of the member, provided that they have lived together for more than two years, the children aged under 18 of either of the spouses who are economically dependent on their parents, persons aged over 18 who have a permanent disability, and persons aged under 25 who are full-time students and economically dependent on the member. If the member does not have a spouse, companion or children, the family cover may be extended to a parent who is economically dependent on the member.

The services covered by the plan have been defined and updated by the National Social Security Council, taking into account the changes in the demographic structure of the population, the national disease profile, the available technology, and the system's financial position.

The following services are currently included in the plan:

* Health education and promotion. This includes the dissemination of information to help to improve the people's health.

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[59] Community mothers are women employed in the community centres programme of the Columbian Family Welfare Institute, which makes arrangements for a mother from the neighbourhood to look after and feed local children.

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* Disease prevention. The population is classified into groups and offered a specific type of cover, as listed below:

- Children aged under 10: vaccination, monitoring of growth and development, food supplement depending on nutritional risk, and sight and hearing tests;

- Adolescents: sight and hearing tests;

- Pregnant women: prenatal checks, identification of risks, food supplements, vaccination, laboratory tests and echography, courses in mental health and childcare, and encouragement of breastfeeding;

- Women of child-bearing age: family planning, reproductive health counselling, cervical/uterine cytology, and breast examinations;

- Men and women aged over 45: assessment of cardiovascular risk;

- Family and community: monitoring of factors connected with the family environment and the physical environment.

* First-level outpatient care. This is provided in the following manner for the categories described above:

- Children aged under 10 and adolescents;

- Childbirth: monitoring of childbirth and provision of dietary supplements;

- Women aged 20 to 60: treatment of women with various levels of abnormality in cytology, sexually transmitted diseases, and prolapsed uterus;

- Men aged 20 to 60: genito-urinary, sexually transmitted and prostate diseases.

* Services in areas of endemic disease.

* Oral health.

* First-level hospital treatment. Special services are provided for the following population groups:

Children aged under 10;

Adolescents;

Pregnant women (care during risk-free deliveries).

* Third- and fourth-level outpatient services (specialist consultations). This covers the groups listed below:

High-risk new-born babies;

Babies aged under 12 months;

Pregnant women at risk: specialist care during delivery and the puerperal period.

* Second- and third-level hospital treatment. Care during high-risk deliveries and in the event of complications, care of high-risk new-born babies, complications of acute diarrhoeal illness and acute pneumonia in children.

* Maternal and child care. Law 100 stipulates that the services provided under the compulsory health plan must always include antenatal checks, attendance during childbirth, postpartum checks, and treatment of problems directly connected with breastfeeding.

For children aged under 12 months the compulsory health plan must always include health education, information and promotion, encouragement of breast-feeding, monitoring of growth and development, and disease prevention; it must also cover immunizations, outpatient, inpatient and emergency treatment, essential medicines, and rehabilitation when necessary. In addition, pregnant women and children aged under 12 months must receive a maintenance grant in cash.

The law stipulates that it is an obligation of the Government "to organize a special programme of information and education for women in aspects of comprehensive health and sex education in the less developed areas of the country", with priority given to rural areas and adolescents.

* Emergency treatment. Emergency first aid must be provided for all persons, regardless of their capacity to pay, by all public and private institutions.

Cover

According to the National Planning Department, in 1993 only 27 per cent of the population were members of the social security system, and most of these people (72.7%) belonged to the public sector.

These data are consistent with those presented in the National
ment Plan 1994-1998, according to which 80 per cent of the population
covered by the social security system. This includes 45.4 per cent of
ellers and almost 80 per cent of the rural population. In addition,
cent of the population without cover live in conditions of poverty.

ially the National Development Plan had set a target for 1998 of
at least two million persons in the subsidized scheme and increasing
st 20 per cent the number of persons paying in to the contributory
These targets have been surpassed by far: by December 1996, 14.3
persons had joined the contributory scheme. Of this number, 10.2
belonged to the Colombian Social Security Institute (ISS) and 4
on to other institutions. At the same date the subsidized scheme had
illion members, reflecting the potential demand for these services.

NUTRITION

Breastfeeding

Of the children born in 1990-1995, 94.5 per cent were breastfed at some time. The difference by sex shows a small variation in favour of girls: 95.2 per cent of them were breastfed at some time, as against 93.9 per cent of boys. These percentages exhibit no significant variation by other variables such as place of residence, mother's level of education, or type of care during childbirth.

The average duration of breastfeeding is 14 months, but as the only means of sustenance it lasts only 1.5 months on average, and almost a half of the children are breastfed for less than a year.

Infant malnutrition

Levels of malnutrition have been steadily declining over the past 30 years. In 1965, 32 per cent of children aged under five suffered chronic malnutrition (subnormal growth); by 1977 this figure had fallen to 22.4 per cent, in 1986 to 16.6 per cent, and in 1995 to 15 per cent. General malnutrition (weight for age) also declined, from 21.1 per cent in 1965 to 8.4 per cent in 1995.

However, the malnutrition rates exhibit significant variations by place of residence and level of education. In rural areas one in five children suffers from chronic malnutrition, whereas in urban areas the ratio is one in eight. In the Cauca and Nariño region (south-west of the country) children aged under five are five times more likely to suffer from chronic malnutrition than children in Cali and Valle. Similarly, 25 per cent of the children of mothers with no education exhibit subnormal growth, as compared with 8 per cent of the children of mothers with higher education.

The malnutrition rate is slightly higher among boys than girls and it increases with age as a result of the cumulative effects of subnormal growth.

Acute malnutrition or emaciation (excessive thinness for height) is rare: less than 2 per cent of children aged under five suffer from acute malnutrition. However, the rate is five times higher on the Pacific Coast than in the rest of the country.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

The Ministry of Health does not yet have accurate and updated information broken down by sex on the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) for the whole country. The only data available at present are those produced by the survey of knowledge, attitudes and practices carried out by the Colombian Social Security Institute and PROFAMILIA in 1994. This study was not based on recorded cases but on the statements of the persons surveyed.

Two per cent of the men and 1.1 per cent of the women said that they had had a sexually transmitted disease during the year preceding the survey.

This was commonest amongst men in urban areas and among poorly educated women in the departments of Antioquia (2.8%) and Valle (2.5%).

There is a direct relationship between the incidence of STD and high-risk sexual behaviour: 10.1 per cent of the men and 25.4 per cent of the women stating that they had had casual relationships and engaged in high-risk behaviour also said that they had suffered from some kind of STD.

AIDS

Incidence

The number of recorded cases of AIDS has increased dramatically. According to the information gathered by the National Programme for Prevention and Control of STD and HIV/AIDS of the Ministry of Health, the cumulative number of cases, including persons showing no symptoms and persons with symptoms, increased from three in 1983 to 193 in 1986, 2,238 in 1989, 5,262 in 1991, 12,861 in 1994, 15,440 in 1995 and 16,043 up to June 1996. This means that the annual rate per million inhabitants rose from 0.6 in 1985 to 71.3 in 1995.

Broken down by sex, in 1985 the rate for men was 1.1 and for women 0.1, whereas in 1995 the rates were 124.6 and 18.8 respectively. The men/women ratio per year has shifted from 17:1 in 1985 to 7:1 in 1995, and 4:1 for the first half of 1994 (table 12.12).

Table 12.12
INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS BY SEX AND YEAR
PER MILLION INHABITANTS, 1985-1996

Year	Asymptomatic			AIDS			Total		
	M	W	Sub-total	M	W	Sub-total	M	W	Sub-total
85	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.0	0.1	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.6
86	0.5	0.0	0.3	3.1	0.1	1.6	3.6	0.1	5.2
87	9.9	0.1	5.0	11.9	0.4	6.1	21.8	0.6	11.7
88	19.3	1.6	10.4	19.3	1.7	10.4	38.5	3.3	20.8
89	28.0	4.3	16.1	25.1	1.8	13.4	53.2	6.1	31.7
90	34.2	4.8	19.4	42.6	3.7	23.0	76.8	8.5	43.2
91	36.8	5.3	20.9	45.3	3.4	24.2	82.1	8.6	47.6
92	28.8	4.9	16.8	33.9	3.0	18.3	62.7	7.9	62.4
93	38.2	5.1	21.5	38.8	3.5	21.0	76.9	8.5	57.6
94	103.6	16.4	59.7	68.2	6.4	37.1	171.9	22.8	97.5
95	80.1	13.4	46.5	44.4	5.4	24.7	124.6	18.8	71.3
96*	17.0	4.6	10.7	9.8	1.3	5.5	26.8	5.9	16.4

* Partial reporting up to June 1996.

Source: Ministry of Health. National Programme for Prevention and Control of STD and HIV/AIDS.

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Analysis by age group shows that most of the infected persons are aged between 25 and 34 (39.3 per cent of the total), followed by the 35-44 age group with 19.1 per cent and by the 15-24 age group with 15.7 per cent.

According to the Ministry of Health, 72.5 per cent of cases are recorded as being sexually transmitted, 1.1 per cent perinatally and 0.9 per cent via blood (including transfusions and intravenous injection of drugs). However, there is no information on the means of transmission in 25.6 per cent of the cases.

Information on AIDS

The 1995 National Survey of Demography and Health of PROFAMILIA includes data on the extent of women's knowledge about AIDS. Almost 99 per cent of Colombian women have heard speak of AIDS. This figure is slightly lower among rural dwellers (96.5%), women with little education (93.6%), and women living in the south-east in Cauca and Nariño (94%).

With regard to means of preventing infection with this disease, 71.7 per cent of women believe that the use of condoms is the best one, and half of them think that infection can be avoided by sticking to a single partner. According to the survey, this information differs from earlier studies, according to which women had cited first faithfulness and second the use of condoms.

A little over half of the women (52.3%) believe that there is no risk that they will catch the disease, and almost 25 per cent do not know that it is a fatal disease. Most of those unaware of the extreme gravity of AIDS are young people and single women.

Eighty-two per cent of the women said that their awareness of AIDS had not altered their sexual behaviour. Only 5.2 per cent said that they now demanded to know their companion's sexual history: 3 per cent had begun to use condoms; and 3 per cent had abandoned sexual relations.

MENTAL HEALTH

In 1994 the Ministry of Health published the National Study on Mental Health and Consumption of Psychotropic Substances (Colombia, 1993), containing collected data on the population's perception of health, the incidence of certain mental disorders, and the patterns and levels of consumption of psychotropic substances. The findings of this research do not cover people in rehabilitation institutions.

Clinical depression

The total incidence of clinical depression is 25.1 per cent. An analysis by sex and degree shows that in 1993 16.2 per cent of men and 21.1 per cent of women suffered mild depression, 4.7 and 11.9 per cent respectively suffered moderate depression, and 0.5 per cent of both sexes suffered severe depression.

Where social status is concerned, it was found that mild depression is

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commoner in the "low" stratum and moderate and severe depression commoner in the "low-low" stratum. In terms of place of residence, the departments of Meta (eastern plains) and Chocó (Pacific Coast region) had levels much higher than the national average: 57.4 and 32.1 per cent respectively.

Anxiety

The total incidence of anxiety is 9.6 per cent. It is 7.1 per cent among men and 12.2 per cent among women. With regard to the degree of anxiety, it was found that 5.6 per cent of men and 8.9 per cent of women suffer slight anxiety, 1.2 and 2.4 per cent suffer moderate anxiety, and 0.3 and 0.9 per cent suffer severe anxiety. This means that there are three women for every man with severe anxiety.

The highest levels of mild anxiety were found in the low-low stratum, moderate anxiety in the low stratum, and severe anxiety in the low-low and medium-low strata.

In terms of place of residence, the highest rates are in Meta (34.1%) and the lowest in Magdalena (2.9%).

Attempted suicide

According to 1993 data, 57 out of every 1,000 Colombians have attempted suicide. The rate had increased since 1987, from 45 per 1,000. A breakdown by sex reveals rates of 49 per 1,000 for men and 66 per 1,000 for women.

A breakdown by age group shows that the rate declines with age: the 12-15 group is at highest risk, with an attempted suicide rate of 91 per 1,000, as against 67 per 1,000 on average among persons aged 16 to 24. The rate is also higher in the low-low stratum.

Alcoholism

According to the Ministry's study, 16.7 per cent of Colombians have high-risk problems of alcoholism. An analysis of this behaviour by sex indicates rates of 26.6 per cent for men and 7.4 per cent for women.

The average age at which Colombians begin to consume alcoholic drinks is 15.6 years. Of the population studied, 52 per cent said that they had consumed alcoholic drinks to the point of inebriation and 17.8 that they had done so for the first time before the age of 16; however, the figures for women are 27.4 and 8.4 per cent, i.e. for every woman who had consumed alcoholic drinks to the point of inebriation before the age of 16, more than three men had done so.

Psychotropic substances

Cocaine

In 1992 the national average rate of cocaine use was 2.8 per 1,000: 5.3 for men and 0.5 for women. With regard to lifetime use, the rate of cocaine addiction was 15.4 per 1,000 men and 1.2 per 1,000 women.

The group at highest risk is young people aged 16 to 19, followed by the 20-24 age group. A total of 15.2 per cent of users had begun between the ages of 11 and 15, 30.4 per cent between 16 and 18, and 45.6 per cent between 19 and 25.

In terms of social class, the highest use rates were found in the middle-high stratum, followed by the high stratum. The rate was higher in urban areas, where there were three users for every one in rural areas.

Bazuco

In 1992 four out of every 1,000 persons used bazuco, and the lifetime addiction rate was 11.5 per 1,000. A breakdown by sex shows that there was one woman user for every eight men. Although the lifetime consumption rate was 20.6 per 1,000 for men, it was only 2.6 for women.

The highest rates of bazuco consumption were found in the 25-29 age group and in the low stratum, followed by middle-low and high. For every user of bazuco in rural areas there were four in urban areas.

Marihuana

The overall figure for lifetime marihuana use is 33 per 1,000. When this figure is broken down by sex, it is found that there are five times more men (56) than women (11).

In terms of age, the 16-19 group is again the highest-risk group, and 63 per cent of marihuana users began before the age of 16. The highest consumption rate was found in the high stratum, followed by middle-high. for every 10 users in rural areas, there were 25 in urban areas.

Heroin

Heroin use is a new problem in Colombia. The total consumption rate is still very low (0.5 per 1,000). Most users (80%) are men aged between 16 and 19, again in urban areas.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HEALTH

In Colombia violence has become an increasingly common cause of bodily harm and death. As stated in the section on the mortality rate, violence is the leading cause of death for women aged 15 to 44 and for the whole of the male population.

With regard to domestic violence, which primarily affects women, 33 per cent of women living with a man say that they have suffered verbal violence, 19.3 per cent physical violence, and 5 per cent sexual violence.[59] Factors such as marital status, place of residence and number of children do not cause any significant differences in the incidence of violence.

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[59] PROFAMILIA. Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1995.

The only factor having a clear impact is education, for almost 24 per cent of poorly educated women living with a man have suffered physical violence, whereas the figure for women with higher education is 7 per cent.

The incidence of physical violence is much higher in urban than in rural areas: in Bogotá and Medellín the rates are 8 and 9 per cent respectively.

According to the data of the National Institute of Forensic Medicine,[60] in cases of domestic violence in 1994 it issued about 12,000 reports on non-fatal bodily harm inflicted on women aged between 25 and 34, approximately 6,000 reports for the 35-44 age group, and some 4,000 reports for the 15-24 age group. These figures stand in sharp contrast with the figures for reports on men in the same circumstances, which did not exceed 1,000 for any age group.

Furthermore, the reports issued by the Institute in cases of sex crimes are disproportionately more numerous for women than for men. According to 1994 data, the largest number of reports on sex crimes was issued for girls aged 10 to 14 (almost 3,500), followed by the 19-25 age group (about 2,500). The male age group for which the largest number of reports on sex crimes was issued was boys aged 5 to 9, with about 300 reports.[61]

Spouse abuse

The National Reference Centre on Violence of the National Institute of Legal Medicine stated that in 1995 it received a total of 42,963 reports of domestic violence, 71 per cent of them concerning spouse abuse. Of this total, 95 per cent of the acts of violence were committed against women. This means a ratio of one man for every 18 women victims. Sixty-seven per cent of these women were aged between 18 and 34.

It should be remembered, however, that these figures represent only the cases reported to the Institute in connection with legal proceedings; the under-recording of domestic violence is very high.

A comparison of the cases of bodily harm resulting from spouse abuse recorded by the Institute in 1993 and 1995 shows alarming increases of up to 819 per cent in Medellín and up to 241 per cent in Florencia. However, it is impossible to determine the extent to which these increases are due to a higher incidence of spouse abuse or to the fact that more cases are being reported.

In 1995 the Institute surveyed one in every three victims reporting spouse abuse and receiving a report from the Institute, with a view to classifying these victims. It found that 95 per cent were women, 45 per cent aged between 25 and 30, 26 per cent with primary education, 59 per cent with secondary, and 11 per cent with at least one semester of university education; 60 per cent lived in open marriages and 31 per cent were married; 93 per cent had an average of two dependants; and only 13 per cent received medical treatment for their injuries.

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[60] The body which issues medical reports for use in court cases.

[61] National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science. Boletín del Centro de Referencia Nacional sobre Violencia, No. 8, March 1996.

In 88 per cent of cases the injuries occurred in the victim's home, and 55 per cent of the attackers had been drinking alcohol prior to the attack. In 85 per cent of cases the victims had a history of injury by the same attacker.

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROGRESS

The health and social security programmes are run by various agencies in and outside the sector: Ministry of Health, Colombian Family Welfare Institute, Colombian Social Security Institute, and the Social Support Network. In the regions the departments and municipalities are responsible for the health care of their inhabitants, using resource transfers and their own resources.

Plan for the promotion of the comprehensive health of women

The Ministry of Health has proposed carrying out a series of strategies to improve women's health at every stage of their life, taking into account the gender-associated factors which influence health and sickness profiles. In this context it is seeking to increase the enrolment of women of all ages in the social security system, to bring the current legislation on equality of reproductive rights to the attention of every man and woman in the country, to enhance awareness and provide training in the agencies providing health services within the social security system so that they will be able to take preventive and promotional action to strengthen the self-esteem, personal care and independence of women, to increase the supply of family planning and advisory services for persons of reproductive age, to improve the cover and quality of the maternity and gynaecological services at all the levels of care and at every stage of life, and to establish epidemiological monitoring services and support networks to treat and protect the victims of physical, verbal, psychological and sexual violence.

Action plan to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality

This programme has been run since 1991 by the Ministry of Health with the support of PAHO, UNICEF and UNFPA. Its goals for the year 2000 are to reduce the maternal mortality rate by 50 per cent, increase antenatal medical cover to 90 per cent and institutional care to at least five checks, augment institutional care during childbirth to 30 per cent, and secure a big improvement in the efficiency of the health services.

The Ministry is achieving some of the earlier targets set for the current period. The difficulties are connected with the unequal stages of development of the agencies providing health services and with the slowness of the decentralization of the services, a process of particular importance since it will enable the municipalities to fulfil better their obligation to protect the health of their inhabitants by means of transfers of resources made available at the national level to provide adequate cover in education and health.

Maternal and child care programme (PAMI)

This programme is run by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, the Ministry of Health and the Social Support Network and is aimed at the country's poorest people; the goal is to guarantee the access of pregnant women and their families to the subsidized social security scheme, reduce maternal, perinatal and infant mortality and morbidity, and strengthen the first-level services.

The programme offers the services of the compulsory health plan to pregnant women in the form of preventive health care and care during childbirth, as well as care of the child during its first year of life.

According to PAMI estimates, Colombia has some 300,000 pregnant women living in extreme poverty. In 1994 and 1995 PAMI enrolled almost 82,000 mothers and 64,000 children aged under 12 months in the subsidized social security scheme. The target for 1996 was 100,000 enrolments, to make a total of 480,000 beneficiaries.

With regard to the support furnished for first-level health services, a total of 11,400 million pesos was invested in 128 municipalities in the form of provision of medical equipment for use mainly in the treatment of sick mothers and children. The total investment target for 1996 was 64,000 million pesos.

REVIVIR: a subsidy for the elderly poor

This is a programme of the Social Support Network of the Office of the President; its main objective is to ensure the survival of people aged over 60, the disabled, and poor people aged over 50 living in conditions of extreme poverty and unable to satisfy their basic needs. It provides grants in goods, services and cash (a minimum of 10 per cent of the value of the subsidy) to the recipient population. The value of the subsidy granted is equal to half the minimum legal wage (about $US 55).

According to information provided by the REVIVIR programme, a little more than 6 per cent of Colombians are aged over 60. Of this figure, only 20 per cent are covered by social security and 15.6 per cent live in absolute poverty. In 1994 a total of 48,161 grants were made; this figure increased to 67,020 in 1995 and to 80,000 in 1996. It is estimated that about 60 per cent of the beneficiaries are women. The programme's target is to reach 240,000 elderly poor, a figure equal to the total number of elderly persons living in extreme poverty.

Programme on diagnosis and monitoring of cervical cancer

Since 1990 the National Cancer Institute has been responsible for running the national programme on diagnosis and monitoring of cervical cancer, which was devised as a response to the high incidence of this disease and its excessively high levels in a number of towns. Between 1990 and 1993 8,800 cases of cervical cancer were diagnosed, 5 per cent of them at an advanced stage. In 1995 5,662 pre-invasive cases were diagnosed, together with 346 cases of incipient cancer, as a result of a total of 341,131 smear tests, representing 53.6 per cent of the programme target.

Nutrition programmes

These programmes are fundamentally the responsibility of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute and are described in the section of this report on article 13.

Development of health legislation and decentralization

The Ministry and its subsidiary bodies, including the Colombian Social Security Institute, have made a great effort to enact legislation, in application of the mandates contained in Law 100 of 1993 on the health and social security systems, governing institutional machinery and procedures to provide universal cover by the health services. The Ministry has also created special units to provide the backing and technical advice which the departments and municipalities need in order to achieve the necessary decentralization of health services.

The Pension Support Fund

This Fund was created by Law 100 of 1993 to subsidize the contributions to the general pension scheme of informal workers members of associative enterprises, community mothers, and the disabled. The National Economic and Social Policy Council (CONPES) establishes the subsidy ceiling, the age requirements and the number of contributory weeks.

The Fund provides community mothers with a pension subsidy once they have completed one year of service. Regardless of age, it pays 80 per cent of the contribution payable on a minimum legal wage.

For poor women in the informal sector who have made up to 300 weeks of pension contributions and are aged between 35 and 65, the Fund pays 70 per cent of the monthly contribution.

Working groups

On promotion of the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM)

The Ministry of Health and the National Office for Equality for Women have created a working group to draw up working plans and furnish advice on the incorporation of EPAM in the health sector and to provide proper monitoring of the efforts to attain the targets.

Support for comprehensive social security

An advisory group was established, with its members drawn from women of various NGOs who have worked in this area, universities, the Ministry of Health, the Colombian Social Security Institute, the Social Support Network, and the National Network of Women for Gender and Reproductive Rights. The purpose is to formulate proposals for providing care for women on the various health fronts.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

The sector has made important progress during the 1990s on the following fronts:

* Female life expectancy was 6.1 years higher in 1995, making a total increase of 10 years over the past three decades.

* The maternal mortality rate fell from 119.82 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1986 to 78.2 in 1994.

* The fertility rate for 1990-1995 was 2.7, representing a drop of almost 23 per cent over the past 15 years.

* Over the past 20 years the infant mortality rate has fallen by 48 per cent from 54 to 28 deaths per 1,000 live births.

* The legislation includes Law 100 of 1993 on comprehensive social security, which covers health and social security and established a contributory scheme and a subsidized scheme with a view to securing universal cover of primary health care by 2000; 1993 also saw the promulgation of Law 63 on decentralization, which provides inter alia for the transfer of health and education resources from the central administration to the municipalities; lastly, CONPES has taken decisions on various aspects of social security, particularly with respect to subsidy funds, and the amounts and recipients of subsidies.

* The Executive has made progress with the enabling legislation of Law 100 and with the creation of institutional arrangements for furnishing advice and support to the departments and municipalities with respect to the certification procedures for decentralized and independent management of the transfer resources.

* The Ministry of Health is implementing a plan of action to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality and a plan to promote the comprehensive health of women.

* The Ministry and the National Office have set up a sectoral working group to draw up a plan of action for the sector to secure the mainstreaming of equality issues in all the Ministry's activities.

* Colombia is making major efforts to support women, especially women workers, with the care of their children and is formulating innovative strategies for this purpose. These efforts have resulted in the following programmes:

Maternal and child care (PAMI): Health Ministry, ICBF, Social Support Network;

Family, women and children (FAMI): ICBF;

Maternal and child nutrition service: ICBF;

/...

Community welfare centres: ICBF;

Family commissions: ICBF;

Awareness-raising and training of civil servants.

* The sector now has valuable information about various health problems, in the form of the studies on abortion carried out by the Extramural University of Colombia, the research on AIDS and mental health of the Ministry of Health, which has been disaggregated by sex, and the data on nutrition, infant mortality, maternal and child health, and domestic violence produced by the 1995 National Survey on Demography and Health carried out by PROFAMILIA.

The sector is encountering problems of various kinds:

* Decentralization has proved more difficult in practice owing to the requirements imposed by the Government for confirmation of the independence of a municipality or department and owing to the technical deficiencies at the local level.

* The application of Law 100 is proving very difficult at the local level, owing in particular to the shift of approach which the mandate of providing universal cover of services entails for a municipality and because of the emergence of the private sector as a provider of services under various schemes. This is having a direct impact on the effort to improve the health indicators.

* There are wide differences in the degree of development and management capacity of the institutions providing health services in the municipalities, in the professional qualifications of their staff, and in the capacity of their institutions to respond to the people's demands. This situation constitutes a particular problem with regard to the care needs of women and for the less developed municipalities.

* The structure of the health system based on the contributory and subsidized schemes tends to work to the disadvantage of women: under the contributory scheme, because there are more women working in sectors which do not have social security; under the subsidized scheme, because women are more seriously affected by the national and local fiscal problems and by the consequent cuts in social investment.

* The past 10 years have seen a steady deterioration in the quality of Colombia's vital statistics owing to the failure to stipulate which institutions are responsible for collecting them, and because of the problems of cover and the difficulties encountered in the systematization of the data.

* Improving the quality and the human approach of the health services, especially for women, remains an unachieved target for the sector despite the efforts already made to enhance awareness and provide training.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Article 13

> "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:
>
> (a) The right to family benefits;
>
> (b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;
>
> (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life."

This section presents a summary of the main activities which the State is carrying out in order to secure equal access by women to services and resources and to promote the social changes which will invest society with a sense of the equality of men and women as human beings. The first task is the responsibility of the institutions executing public policies, such as the ministries and decentralized agencies; the second is a task undertaken mainly by the national women's agency, currently the National Office for Equality for Women.

The relevant information has been grouped into three sections: policies for women in Columbia; measures in favour of women; and progress and difficulties in the application of policies.

POLICIES FOR WOMEN IN COLUMBIA

Women have made significant advances with respect to enroling and remaining in the education system and in access to the labour market, as well as in health and life expectancy, all of which means greater access to State resources and services. However, these advances are less the result of specific policies of equality for women than effects of the country's urbanization, industrialization and modernization.

Despite the advances, powerful determinants of social inequality persist in Colombia for half its population, together with other factors which produce and maintain inequality between men and women.

In 1990 Colombia began to formulate policies and programmes specifically intended to have an impact on the management of policies, plans and programmes for the gradual mainstreaming of gender equality for women as a means of eliminating the obstacles to their access to State resources and services. Successive Governments have secured the approval by CONPES, the highest policy-making body, of programme proposals in favour of women. In 1994 CONPES approved the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM), which was incorporated in the 1994-1998 National Development Plan: the Social Leap Forward (Law 188 of 1995) as one of the social strategies for the establishment of an economic development model incorporating social equality.

Since 1990 the common policy objectives have been:

* To improve the people's living conditions, especially those of women living in poverty, by incorporating a new political and cultural perspective which transforms State action into a response to the differing needs of women and men.

* To modify the cultural factors which cause and maintain the discrimination and inequality between men and women.

* To achieve the modern and efficient integration of women in economic and social development processes.

The common constraints are:

* A lack of determination on the part of the State to translate policies into programmes.

* An institutional culture fairly resistant to changes in the roles, functions and images of men and women.

The EPAM strategy, which is currently being implemented and is described in the section on article 1, is carried out by the National Office for Equality for Women through the policy-execution agencies: ministries, decentralized bodies of the central Government, and departmental and municipal agencies.

MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF WOMEN

The State is carrying out measures on various fronts under EPAM:

Legislation

The 1991 Constitution stipulated the equality of men and women and represented progress with respect to the fundamental political, economic, social and cultural rights of men and women. Pursuant to the Constitution, many laws have been enacted by the Congress and several decisions of the Constitutional Court have been incorporated in case law. No law excludes or formally discriminates against women, and some of the laws are specifically designed to protect women's rights. These advances are often undermined in practice when the laws are not fully carried out, either through ignorance or through lack of effective machinery for their application.

Some of the legislation enacted over the past five years which favours women more directly has been described throughout this report. In this section such legislation is presented in summary form:

* Inclusion in the 1991 Constitution of a concept of real equality and equity which facilitates the introduction of special measures of treatment and protection to provide specific support for groups suffering discrimination or marginalization and for persons in circumstances of manifest weakness.

/...

* The constitutional mandate to provide special protection for pregnant women and women heads of household.

* Constitutional developments embodied in the legislation protecting women heads of household and establishing a preferential age qualification for the receipt of the old-age pension by women workers.

* Legislation on 12 weeks of paid maternity leave during the childbirth period, which is extended to a mother adopting a child aged under seven at the time of formal adoption, and to an adoptive father having no spouse or permanent companion. One week's leave may be granted to the spouse or permanent companion at the time of the birth.

* Paid leave of two to four weeks for women workers suffering a miscarriage or non-viable premature birth.

* Paid breaks for breastfeeding for two 30-minute periods during the working day, and compensation equivalent to double the remuneration for breaks not granted if the employer disregards the law.

* Prohibition of dismissal, without permission of the authorities, by reason of pregnancy or breastfeeding, and the right of women in such cases to compensation equivalent to 60 days' wages and to payment for the 12 weeks' leave if it has not been taken. The prohibition of dismissal is extended on the same terms to women and men adopting a child.

* The constitutional mandate to guarantee women adequate and effective participation at the decision-making levels of the public administration.

* The legislation providing protection against domestic violence and ratifying the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

* The legislation on sexual abuse, which criminalizes spouse abuse.

* The legislation protecting the family home by preventing its transfer without the consent of one of the spouses or permanent companions.

* The divorce legislation which defines the situation of women with regard to civil and property status and the obligations to maintain the family and the children.

* The legislation regulating the property of de facto marriages and providing legal protection of the rights of women in such a situation.

* The legislation establishing the equality of children born in and out of wedlock and of adopted children, and providing protection against discrimination based on family origin.

* The attempt to give effect, for women, to ILO Convention 156 of 1981, which seeks to ensure that family responsibilities do not constitute a factor of discrimination, and to promote the application of Law 100, which seeks to eliminate the causes of wage discrimination.

/...

* The introduction of procedures and appointment of specialized personnel to resolve family conflicts and encourage the use of conciliation.

* The enactment of important social legislation pursuant to the Constitution in such areas as education and social security, to the direct or potential benefit of women.

* The increasing use by women of actions of tutela as a constitutional means of providing immediate protection for their fundamental rights; the Constitutional Court has established important precedents on the protection of the rights of women, female adolescents and girls.

Programmes to generate jobs and incomes

In pursuit of its goal of improving work opportunities for women EPAM is promoting and securing the entry of women into the State jobs creation programmes, some of which give priority to women heads of household. These programmes include: job training; loans for income generation; support for working mothers with the care of their children in community centres, which are in turn sources of income for the women staffing the centres; assistance with improvement of the living and working conditions of women heads of household; and health and social security protection for women workers.

The national programmes for the creation of productive jobs are associated with the policies for modernization of industry and agriculture and with the promotion of farm exports, micro-enterprises and other small businesses. None of these policies refers expressly to the employment of women, nor are there information systems designed to ensure monitoring of the effects of the policies on each of the sexes. Given the current problems in achieving the proposed employment targets, it is highly possible that the benefits for women will be fewer or furnished on unfavourable terms.

Job training

Vocational training and the provision of employment services are basic strategies of the employment policies. The National Training Service (SENA) is the agency responsible for job training. It has many programmes for this purpose. Even though there is no explicit discrimination in the access of men and women to technical careers, a study of persons taking up such careers does show a clear cultural division or a kind of occupational orientation which is linked to the traditional patterns of "male" and "female" professions and occupations. Accordingly, while there is no sexism in the formulation of the programmes, it is evident in the choices which men and women make between the programmes.

In recent years SENA has demonstrated its interest in studying and reorganizing its own institutions and giving careful thought to the nature of the programmes offered, as well as in offering programmes incorporating a dimension of equality for women. Together with the Secretariat for Women's and Gender Affairs of the Office of the President, it produced an institutional diagnosis and a working plan with a view to beginning to build true equality.

With the support of the National Office for Equality for Women, SENA is currently developing a plan which includes awareness-raising activities on this topic for civil servants and students at the national and regional levels, training for teachers and civil servants responsible for establishing EPAM in the institutions, production of materials for the attainment of this objective, and design of a programme to promote the employment of women in jobs traditionally regarded as male.

Special jobs programmes

As part of its social policy the Government is carrying out three initiatives to secure the employment of vulnerable groups affected by structural and regional imbalances in the labour market:

Emergency job-training programme. This programme is carried out by SENA and the Social Support Network; it provides "maintenance grants" of 50,000 pesos a month for unemployed poor people. In 1995 it made 21,209 grants to the urban unemployed; it is estimated that 30 per cent of the recipients were women. In 1996 the programme's cover was expanded. In rural areas, where there are programmes of a different kind, the cover is less extensive (see the section on article 14, concerning rural women).

Urban and rural emergency job-creation programme. It is estimated that 30 per cent of the beneficiaries of this programme are women, especially women living in urban areas and working in the services sector.

Programme of support for the cooperative economy. A major restructuring of institutions has been initiated in order to modernize their functioning and make use of a greater proportion of the institutional resources of the sector itself and of the private sector. In the 1990s so far, this sector has not received determined support, so that the position of the women working in it has not improved to any great extent. Women account for about 42 per cent of the membership of cooperatives, 32 per cent of their administrative councils, and 15 per cent of their management bodies.

Women's cooperatives make up less than two per cent of the total and, taken together, they experience the greatest difficulties of development and consolidation.

Support for households headed by women

The programmes for women heads of household are a response to the increase in the proportion of such households, which ranges from 23 to 35 per cent depending on the definition criteria, and to their extreme vulnerability, especially when they include children aged under five.

A number of studies[62] have documented the unprotected situation and poverty of households headed by women. In 1987 95 per cent of men heads of household lived with their spouse or companion, but women heads did so in only 12 per cent of cases (the lack of a spouse or companion is indeed one of the criteria for defining a woman head of household); in addition, 31 per cent of women heads of household suffered from some illness, but the number of men in this situation was lower (17%); and the level of education of the women was lower (3.4 years) than that of men (5.1 years).

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[62]. Ana Rico de Alonso. La Feminización de la Pobreza: estudio de caso comparativo sobre la situación de hogares con jefatura femenina y masculina en un sector de estrato 1 en Cali. Cali, FES, Banco Mundial de la Mujer de Cali, 1987.

Despite the possible under-recording of women heads of household owing to the ambiguity of the concepts used in the compilation of the information, the National Survey of Poverty and Quality of Life (DANE, 1993) does indicate a large number of poor households headed by women: 37.6 per cent in rural areas (table 13.1). However, it must be pointed out that there is no significant difference in poverty, especially when measured by incomes, between households headed by women and by men; this may point to the existence of a problem not of gender discrimination but of inequality in the incomes of some population groups which does not affect only heads of household. As pointed out above, the significant differences are found in urban households when they have children aged under five.

Table 13.1
HOUSEHOLDS BY SEX OF HEAD AND DEGREE OF POVERTY, 1993

	HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY MEN			HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY WOMEN		
AREA	TOTAL	NOT POOR	POOR	TOTAL	NOT POOR	POOR
National total	5 449 982	4 088 354	1 361 628	1 607 062	1 304 672	302 410
%	100	75.0	25.0	100	81.2	18.8
Urban total	3 579 932	3 087 951	491 981	1 242 903	1 077 511	165 392
%	100	86.3	13.7	100	86.7	13.3
Rural total	1 870 050	1 000 405	869 645	364 179	227 161	137 018
%	100	53.5	46.5	100	62.4	37.6

Source: DANE. National Survey of Poverty and Quality of Life, 1993.

In recent years Government agencies and NGOs have been carrying out joint programmes which seek solutions to the problems of households headed by women. The following programmes deserve mention:

Development programme for families headed by women

This programme began in 1990 as an experiment in Cali in conjunction with the Foundation for Higher Education (FES) and the Banco Mundial de la Mujer de Cali and with financial backing from the Ford Foundation. Subsequently the Office of the President, first through the Presidential Council on Youth, Women and the Family and later through the Secretariat for Women's and Gender Affairs, took over the coordination and gave its financial support to expand the cover to 24 towns. At present the same institutions, with the backing of IDB/FOMIN, under the coordination of the National Office for Equality for Women and with the participation of 26 regional NGOs, are continuing to extend the reach of the programme in some of the towns where it is operating.

With regard to urban distribution, and taking into account the degree of poverty and the number of women in the poorer population groups who have their own businesses, it is estimated that a total of 100,000 women should be covered by the programme. At present it is reaching about 10,000 heads of household, and the indirect benefits to households reach approximately 50,000 persons.

The programme has the following components targeted on households and women:

* Improvement of incomes. The aim is to improve and/or stabilize incomes by providing financial services through a loan fund and training and advice in social and business matters.

* Production development. Support is provided to strengthen the economic activities carried on by women with technical, economic and financial advice; when necessary, the relocation of the businesses is encouraged. To this end agreements have been concluded with other bodies such as SENA, the Chamber of Commerce and FENALCO, which will facilitate technical training in marketing, manufacture of clothing and processing of foodstuffs.

* Integrated development of women. The aim is to reinforce the gender identity of women heads of household and women workers, boost their self-esteem and leadership qualities, and equip them with the tools to help them to find the best solutions to the problems of their situation, so that they can improve their work output and realise themselves as human beings.

* Integrated services. Institutional and community alternatives are offered for access to social services which improve personal and family circumstances and ease the burden of domestic work.

* Promotion and publicity. This activity includes the design of a non-traditional means of communication which takes into account the women's type of occupation and daily schedule and develops information strategies with messages reflecting the diversity of gender situations and regional identities and coordinates actions at the national and local levels.

* Research. With the collaboration of the women and agencies involved in the programme, research is carried out on the specific problems which both encounter, with a view to suggesting intervention options.

* Institutional capacity-building. The aim is to ensure the maintenance of the programme in the long term by furnishing technical support to the executing NGOs, facilitating the systematization of their experience, establishing suitable monitoring and control systems, and encouraging the incorporation of new dimensions in the programme in the light of the women's social and cultural characteristics and their needs.

* Benefits of the programme. The activities are based on a methodology which coordinates the solution of economic, technological and personal-development problems with other similar programmes, integrating them as a whole or by component:

/...

- It reinforces the involvement of civil society through the activities of NGOs, women's groups, feminist groups and financial organizations of the informal sector. The process of negotiation between civil society and the State has also been strengthened;

- It coordinates the decisions of Governments and international cooperation in support of a private-sector experiment which will later become a joint programme. This means that the programme originates from civil society and wins support from the State and from abroad.

- The programme has channelled resources to the loan fund, which has an average rotation of 3.75 times. At present the sum of $US 1 million is being negotiated with IFI/FINURBANO for loans, which will continue to be granted by the existing executing agencies. The intention is to expand the cover of the loan facilities with a grant from IDB/FOMIN to FES in the amount of $US 3.5 million, and to expand training with the FES resources.

Subsidy for school children dependent on women heads of household

This programme is executed by the Social Support Network and provides grants for the purchase of textbooks, equipment and uniforms for school children dependent on women heads of household. In 1995 a total of 79,655 grants was made in 502 municipalities throughout the country, and the plan for 1996 was to increase this total to 95,033.

Priorities in programmes and services

Women heads of household are designated a priority group in most of the sectoral programmes: housing, access to land and loans, health and social security subsidies, children's nurseries, and health and nutritional care for the women and their families. Law 82 of 1993 grants them this recognition in view of their situation. However, since this Law has still not been given legal effect by the Executive, compliance with this priority depends on the decision taken under each programme. The National Office for Equality for Women has set up an interinstitutional working group to draft the enabling legislation for this Law.

Research

Compliance with the constitutional and legal mandates requires continuous study of the population group consisting of women heads of household. This is the only way to match the available services and the action plans to the enormous diversity of these women's situations. This task has been undertaken by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), which has initiated the study of women in this situation working in the informal sector in the country's four main cities.

Programme to improve housing and its physical environment

This is a subsidy programme operating in urban areas through the National Institute of Urban Housing (INURBE) and the Social Support Network. In 1995 there were 33,795 beneficiaries, some 70 per cent of whom were women heads of household.

In rural areas the programme is implemented by the Agrarian Credit Fund and the Social Support Network through the provision of grants for basic sanitation and housing projects. In 1995 147,253 families, including 54,646 (37%) headed by women, benefited from these activities.

Health and social security

Attention is drawn to the programmes described in the section of the report on article 12:

Maternal and child care programme

Plan for the promotion of the comprehensive health of women

Action plan to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality

Programme on diagnosis and control of cervical cancer

Development of the legislation on health and decentralization

Pension Support Fund

Programmes of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF)

* Family, Women and Children Programme (FAMI). ICBF provides direct care for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers under the FAMI programme, supporting poor mothers (groups 1 and 2 according to unsatisfied basic needs) during pregnancy and breastfeeding and the raising of their children, and providing food supplements for children aged under two. The cover increased slightly between 1993 and 1994 (table 13.2).

Table 13.2
COVER OF FAMI, 1993 AND 1994

	1993		1994	
	Cover	%	Cover	%
Children under 2	150 926	31.5	130 953	35.1
Pregnant mothers	99 862	20.9	78 351	21.0
Breastfeeding mothers	77 857	16.3	85 376	22.9
Other attendants	150 299	31.3	78 375	21.0
TOTAL	478 944	100	373 055	100

Source: ICBF. Boletin Estadistico 1995.

* Maternal and Child Nutrition Programme. ICBF operates this programme in rural areas in order to improve the nutrition of pregnant and breastfeeding indigenous women and their children aged under seven. It promotes community organization, family involvement and institutional coordination, with special emphasis given to health and nutrition education and the healthy psycho-social development of children and young people. The programme had the

following cover in 1993 and 1994.

Table 13.3
MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMME

	1993	1994
ICBF		
No. of municipalities	507	293
No. of service units	3 282	1 951
No. of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers	91 496	39 916
No. of children aged 6 to 24 months	84 555	33 567
No. of children aged 2 to 7 years	110 653	43 938
TOTAL	286 704	117 421
HEALTH		
No. of municipalities	737	737
No. of service units	3 258	2 936
No. of recipients	554 497	169 862
TOTAL RECIPIENTS	841 183	287 283

Source: ICBF. Boletin Estadistico 1995.

Note: the difference in cover is due to the fact that from 1994 the programme does not include urban areas and concentrates on rural and indigenous population groups.

* Child nutrition and care programmes. ICBF provides food supplements for children whose mothers have to be absent from the household to work and it also offers nursery services. These two activities are aimed at mothers in the poorest population groups and they have different operational modalities.

The target population of the ICBF programmes in 1991-1994 totalled 6,268,446 persons and was determined on the basis of the DANE index of unsatisfied basic needs.

Table 13.4
TARGET POPULATION OF ICBF PROGRAMMES BY GROUP DISTRIBUTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, 1991-1994

NATIONAL GROUP TOTAL	POPULATION	%
Children under 7	2 406 873	38.4
Children 7 to 18	2 897 825	46.23
Pregnant and breastfeeding mothers	485 938	7.75
Old people (over 60)	477 810	7.62
TOTAL	6 268 446	100

Source: ICBF. Boletin Estadistico 1995.

* Community welfare centres and kindergartens. These services provide half-day nursery services for children of preschool age, i.e. aged 2 to 5. With

respect to health and nutrition, there is a programme of supplementary care for school children and adolescents designed to improve the health, nutrition and psycho-social development of children and adolescents whether or not they attend school.

In 1994 the community welfare centres provided a cover of 65.6 per cent in urban areas, 33.5 per cent in rural areas, and 0.9 per cent in indigenous areas. This distribution shows that the State pays less attention to rural communities although they are the ones with the highest poverty levels. According to DANE, in 1993 the proportion of poor urban households was 39.9 per cent, as against 60.5 per cent in rural areas.

The ICBF services are backed by the Social Support Network, which contributes to the food supplements offered to children in the community welfare centres: each child is provided with food to be eaten at home. This is also done during holiday periods. According to the Network's figures, between 1993 and 1994 there was no increase in the number of community welfare centres. In 1993 there were officially 58,988 centres reaching 878,931 children aged under seven; in 1994 the numbers fell to 58,759 and 870,567. In 1995 the programme had 59,353 centres caring for 890,295 children.

* Programme on protection of children in community kindergartens. Teaching activities are carried out and food is provided for children aged 2 to 5 from poor families and there are education and training programmes for the mothers and fathers, or other adults having charge of the children, designed to strengthen the relationship with them, their children and the family in general. The aim is that they should visit the kindergartens at least twice a month. In 1993 there were 102 community kindergartens catering for 6,703 children. In 1994 the number of kindergartens fell to 68, reaching only 4,616 children.

* ICBF programme of supplementary care for schoolchildren and adolescents. The cover declined between 1991 and 1994. The number of municipalities participating in the programme fell from 1,136 to 1,017, the number of meals provided from 390,088 to 340,197, and small snacks from 916,178 to 883,250. The number of service units rose from 23,588 to 24,793 and the number of large snacks provided from 796,200 to 815,399.

* Food vouchers for rural children of preschool age not reached by the community welfare centres. The aim is to cut the malnutrition levels and ensure the proper development and growth of children aged 1 to 7 living in thinly populated rural areas. The vouchers provide uncooked food once a month, and health care is provided for the children, together with training for their families. In 1995 this programme reached 82,812 children and their families.

* The family commissions programme. This programme is responsible for strengthening the family commissions set up by municipal councils. The 180 commissions currently in existence have received grants of equipment and training. The training is aimed not only at their staff but also at the interdisciplinary teams working in the central zones of the country. Priority has been given to the following topics: family reconciliation,

rights and obligations of mothers, fathers and children and of the couple, domestic violence, the family and human rights, political and civil rights, protection of children, and study of family composition.

With a view to analysing the problems of the family in Colombia, several academics held six regional workshops for families. The conclusions were compiled in the book Reflexiones para la Intervención en la Problemática Familiar, published in 1995.

Institutional work of the National Office for Equality for Women and ICBF

As part of the interinstitutional work of the National Office and ICBF, an awareness-raising and training programme was carried out for a group of regional personnel of the Family Unit with a view to establishing equality for women in this agency. To this end, an EPAM document was produced and disseminated at the national and regional levels, and a handbook on revision of the material produced by ICBF was prepared, thus ensuring the non-sexist depiction of men and women.

Disabled women

Article 47 of the Constitution states: "The State shall operate a policy of prevention, rehabilitation and social integration for persons suffering physical, sensory or mental disability, who shall receive the specialized care which they require".

In 1996 the Ministry of Health produced a study entitled "Outline of health care for the disabled". This study estimates that 12 per cent of Colombia's population (4.2 million people) have some kind of physical, sensory or mental disability or limitation, and that 60 per cent of them (2.52 million) are children and young people. Unfortunately, the information is not broken down by sex and the standard mortality and morbidity data do not usually indicate such factors as the incidence of disability, the demand for rehabilitation services, or the social situation of the disabled.

In January 1995 the Government formulated the Policy for Prevention and Treatment of Disability 1995-1998, whose objectives are to improve the quality of life and the social and economic integration of the disabled. To this end it proposes programmes on education, health and social security, employment, transport and accessibility, and research and development of appropriate technologies, together with specific activities and promotional work to foster a culture of respect for and support of the disabled. These programmes are intended for both sexes and do not take specific account of the situation or needs of disabled women.

Education

A major effort has been made in the 1990s to give effect to the constitutional mandates on universal access to basic education, decentralization of the education services, and participation of civil society in education. Two results of this effort were the promulgation of Law 115 of 1993 and the formulation of the Ten-Year Education Plan 1996-2005. This plan refers specifically to the objective of eliminating all

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discrimination or isolation on the ground of sex with respect to enrolment and retention in the education system.

In recent years serious institutional efforts have been made to reduce the amount of sexist teaching in education. Although this undertaking is still in its initial stages, the women's office of the Office of the President, which has been operating since 1990 under various administrative arrangements, and the Ministry of National Education have been carrying out fundamental work in this respect.

The sector's programmes are described in the section of this report on article 10.

Rural development

The goals of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with respect to equality for women and gender analysis are to promote equality of opportunity between the two sexes, reach agreement with the other sectors on the provision of services for rural women, adapt the institutions of the agricultural sector by removing the obstacles preventing or impeding women's access to production resources and increased incomes, and reinforce the organization and participation of rural women.

In order to attain these goals the Ministry has commissioned the Office of Rural Women and its affiliated bodies to formulate a number of programmes in line with the proposed targets and the specific functions of each agency. The programmes currently being implemented are described in the section of this report on article 14 and relate to the following areas: employment, improved productivity, access to land and loans, support for rural women heads of household, and programmes to improve living conditions.

Culture, recreation and sports

Colombia has a cultural policy for the promotion and encouragement of research and creative activities, access to cultural assets, and decentralization of the management of cultural activities. In none of these areas is there any specific reference to increased involvement of women.

Law 181 of 1995 on sports specifies strategies and promotional activities for competitive and non-competitive sports and for recreational activities. The Colombian Sports Institute (COLDEPORTES) and the Social Support Network have a special programme entitled "Sporting Talents" which provides scholarships for outstanding young sportsmen. Neither the legislation nor the COLDEPORTES programmes make any reference to the participation of girls, young women or women. The work with the Ministry of Education on curricular and extracurricular sports activities is revealing the open and masked forms of discrimination against girls and young women in this area.

Justice and human rights

Several institutions are carrying out activities within their respective spheres of competence to strengthen women's rights in various areas:

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* The Ombudsman's Office has played an active role in the Congress with respect to draft legislation on women's rights, and in the Constitutional Court with respect to the hearing of actions of tutela brought in defence of those rights. It has also given widespread publicity to women's rights in publications and at meetings.

* The Presidential Council on Human Rights, in accordance with its mandate to study the situation of human rights and monitor their observance, has established a policy on the human rights of women, with special reference to the current situation of armed conflict and forced displacement in Colombia.

* In 1996 the State adopted, in its three branches of power, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women and made it a law of the Republic.

* Laws have been enacted pursuant to the Constitution to protect the rights of ethnic minorities, and State and civic machinery has been established to give effect to these laws, even though the necessary results are still not being achieved in practice.

* An interinstitutional committee was set up to prevent and punish abuse of women.

The Ministry of Education has a Division of Ethnic Education, which works on the content of teaching materials and training of teachers for ethnic communities.

* The Ministry of Education and the Presidential Council on Human Rights operate the School for Democracy, whose work is concerned with the reinforcement of attitudes and practices which foster democratic coexistence and respect for human rights.

* In 1993 and 1994 various Government agencies held 600 local workshops to publicize the 1991 Constitution as a bill of human rights, and they also carried out several mass media campaigns with the same objective.

* The 1991 Constitution prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment, slavery, servitude and abuse of persons. The criminal law punishes the prostitution of others.

The following activities have been carried out in order to tackle prostitution and abuse of women:

- Study carried out by the Office of the Deputy Attorney General for the Protection of Minors and the Family in 60 per cent of the national territory and formulation of a proposal for joint work with ICBF for child prostitutes;
- Study carried out by the Ombudsman's Office in the country's four main cities;
- Start-up of the integrated treatment programme for children involved in prostitution, implemented by ICBF with the participation of the

Office of the Deputy Attorney General, the Ombudsman's Office, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Education and INTERPOL.

Programmes of the National Office for Equality for Women and its advisory bodies

The progress made in developing the institutional arrangements and activities of the National Office and its advisory bodies are described in the section of this report on article 4.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

* Colombia has a national policy for equality and participation approved by CONPES, the highest policy-making body, on which the National Office for Equality for Women is represented. This policy has been more successful than previous ones in that it is incorporating women's problems in the life of the State and, in addition to the necessary ad hoc measures, it is promoting change in the institutional and civic culture. It is also establishing the notion of equity, recognizing and defending the differences between men and women, and the concept of equality as something applicable to access to goods and services and their control, as well as to the consequences of policies and programmes relating to both areas.

* Pursuant to the Constitution, the three branches of public power have made significant progress in the enactment of laws and decrees and in court decisions which foster the advancement of women.

* The Congress and the Executive have equipped the country with stable and independent institutional arrangements for promoting equality, securing participation in the activities and services of State agencies, and providing the technical support which these agencies need for the implementation of the sectoral programmes.

* A debate is being conducted in the central Government and in the national agencies, as well as in some local agencies, concerning the need and importance of removing obstacles to women's access to the services and resources of the State and incorporating this topic transversally in the National Development Plan and in public policies.

* The formal debate is not entirely matched by the practice, as can be seen from the cuts in social investment, in the budgets which fund the agencies or units responsible for questions of equality for women, and in the programmes targeted specifically on women. This situation is also reflected in the resistance of the institutional culture to the changes demanded by equality.

* The policies of the social sectors, particularly health and education, contain strategies and programmes which claim to be "neutral" with respect to gender analysis and the concept of equality for women. This means that, although there is no discrimination in the efforts to extend the reach of the programmes, a factor which may indirectly favour the participation of women, there are no affirmative action measures to bridge the existing gaps or bring about a qualitative change in the approach and in the provision of services.

* Colombia is making major efforts to support women, especially working women, with respect to the nutrition and care of their children and has produced innovative strategies for this purpose. In terms of cover, the attention is focused basically on poor women workers in urban areas, but even for this specific population group the effort is insufficient. Accordingly, in terms of quality there is a need to improve the training of the personnel caring for children, especially the community mothers, and to strengthen even further the coordination of these programmes with the preschool programmes of the Ministry of Education.

* The Ministry of Agriculture and its affiliated and associated agencies are focusing their efforts on the systematic training of the sector's civil servants in the conceptual and methodological aspects of rural development planning incorporating an equality dimension. In addition, they are seeking to adapt their institutions so that, from a coordinated basis, they will be able to identify the changes required in the procedures and instruments used in the various agency programmes and thus increase women's access to and participation these programmes. However, the sector's most important programmes still reach very few women.

* As part of the decentralization process, the national agencies have ceded planning and programme execution functions to the departments and municipalities, retaining for themselves the functions of technical advice and monitoring of programmes and targets. In these latter activities they are having to cope with serious shortcomings in procedures and machinery and with their own lack of coercive power to drive others to attain the goals. In this connection the advances made in terms of legislation become blurred in actual practice, which is where the effectiveness of the formal rights is truly demonstrated.

RURAL WOMEN

Article 14

> "1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.
>
> 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:
>
> (a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;
>
> (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

(e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;

(f) To participate in all community activities;

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications."

This section of the report deals with the following topics: the rural context; the general situation of women; the work of rural women; policies and programmes; and progress and difficulties.

THE RURAL CONTEXT

The general features of the rural context are poverty, the technological backwardness of most of the small producers, and the economic decline of the farming sector. This latter aspect is becoming particularly apparent in the 1990s.

This situation is determined by structural factors connected with the primacy of the urban-industrial development model adopted in Colombia and with the implementation of macroeconomic policies. In fact, by converting the towns into the main poles of development and relegating the rural sector to second place Colombia has focused the attention of social and economic policies on the urban areas. It has thus widened the gap between these two big social contexts: the urban world has emerged as modern and prosperous (although fragmented), and the rural world has remained marginalized from the development process.

In addition, the recent introduction of neoliberal economic policy models has banished the more traditional rural occupations to the periphery. This development has exacerbated the differences between urban and rural areas by assuming the existence of a homogeneous market, in which all the sectors operate according to identical principles and rules, under the same technological conditions, and with the same volume of job training. This model is tantamount to a theoretical denial of the endemic fragmentation of the Colombian economy and in practice it works against production on small plots and other rural activities.

Accordingly, the 1990s have so far seen a series of changes which have revealed a gloomy social picture of the living conditions and quality of life of rural dwellers. The following are some of the more important of these changes:

Demographic aspects

The rural areas have been losing population. Despite the statistical difficulties of recording this phenomenon,[63] it is clear that the urban population is increasing in step with the depopulation of the countryside. Between 1985 and 1993 rural areas lost between 9.4 and 10.4 million inhabitants, an annual decrease of about 1.3 per cent.[64]

Economic aspects

In the last two decades agriculture has contributed an annual average of 22 per cent of GDP, having "...the same importance as the industrial sector in its contribution to GDP and in the explanation of GDP growth".[65] However, in the 1990s so far the sector has exhibited serious signs of decline.

In the early 1990s there was already a decline in agricultural growth rates. Negative figures were recorded in 1991 and the situation worsened in 1992, when the rates generally fell to -2 per cent, with an even sharper drop to -3.9 per cent in the non-coffee subsectors.

There was also a decline in the cultivated area: by 3.7 per cent in 1991 and by 6.1 per cent in 1992, representing a loss of 358,000 hectares of cultivated land.

Together with the discouraging picture provided by the economic indicators, there was a decline in purchases of inputs, improved seeds and tractors, as well as in the international prices for farm goods, which affected mainly the farm exports sectors, coffee in particular.

Rural employment rates

Some of the changes which began in earlier decades have become even more apparent in recent years. Perhaps the one with the greatest social impact is the salarization of the rural workforce, for this is a process associated with the commercialization of agriculture, the impoverishment of small farmers and, in general, the integration of rural families in the labour market.[66]

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[63] Problems have been acknowledged in the social and economic analysis of the concept of rural population used by DANE in defining the "chief towns" as urban settlements without taking into account the fact that many of them still follow a largely rural pattern of life.

[64] J. A. Ocampo and S. Perry. El Giro de la Política Agropecuaria. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Tercer Mundo, 1995.

[65] A. Gaitán and L. Rugeles. Las Mujeres Productores de Alimentos en Colombia. Santa Fe de Bogotá, IICA, 1996.

This gradual salarization has been accompanied by a decrease in unpaid family work (table 14.1), which may indicate changes in the relations of labour in the farm economy.

Table 14.1
EMPLOYED RURAL POPULATION, BY JOB AND BY SEX, 1980 AND 1994
(percentages)

JOB	1980 M	1980 W	1994 M	1994 W
TOTAL	100	100	100	100
Day labourer	39.5	12.6	41.7	9.7
Employee	5.6	11.6	14.9	25.9
Domestic employee	0.0	3.8	0.2	12.1
Employer	7.5	1.7	5.1	2.6
Own-account worker	30.0	38.4	30.9	36.7
Unpaid family worker	17.3	31.9	7.4	12.7

Source: Based on ENH, 1980 and 1994.[67]

This table also shows the diversification of rural employment as a result of the worsening economic crisis in the farm sector, which has compelled many rural workers to take non-farm work. This fact is corroborated by the decrease in the cultivated area mentioned above.

The number of men employed as manual workers rose from 39.5 per cent in 1980 to 41.7 per cent in 1994, while the number of women fell from 12.6 to 9.7 per cent in the same years. However, women have shown a clear increase in their employment as "domestic workers", from 3.8 per cent in 1980 to 12.1 per cent in 1994.

Men and women are increasingly working as "employees", with the numbers doubling: men from 5.6 per cent to 14.9 per cent, and women from 11.6 to 25.9 per cent. Attention must also be drawn to the decline in the category of unpaid family worker: men from 17.3 to 7.4 per cent, and women from 31.9 to 12.7 per cent.

Generally speaking, rural dwellers are increasingly found in the wage-earning categories.[68] In 1980 45.1 per cent of men and 28 per cent of women were employed in these categories, but in 1994 the figures were 56.5 and 47.8 per cent respectively.

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[66]. J. A. Ocampo and S. Perry. Op. cit., p. 40.

[67] The tables in this section were prepared by Elvia Maria Acuña with data from the National Survey of Rural Households (ENHR), September 1994, and from the 1993 DANE National Survey of Poverty and Quality of Life.

[68] These categories are day labourer, employee and domestic employee.

Quality of life

It is obvious that the quality of life in rural areas is poor. According to the 1993 DANE National Survey of Poverty and Quality of Life, rural households have a much higher poverty rate than urban households (table 14.2).

Table 14.2
HOUSEHOLDS BY POVERTY LEVEL (UBN) AND RURAL
OR URBAN LOCATION, 1993
(percentages)

	TOTAL	NOT POOR	POOR
NATIONAL TOTAL	100	76.4	23.6
URBAN TOTAL	100	86.4	13.6
RURAL TOTAL	100	54.9	45.1

Source: Based on DANE. National Survey of Poverty and Quality of Life 1993.

Similarly, rural areas have 60.5 per cent of poor households and only 22.7 per cent of not-poor households according to the intra-group percentage calculations shown in the following table.

Table 14.3
HOUSEHOLDS BY POVERTY LEVEL AND RURAL
OR URBAN LOCATION, 1993
(intra-group percentages)

	NOT POOR	POOR
NATIONAL TOTAL	100	100
URBAN TOTAL	77.3	39.5
RURAL TOTAL	22.7	60.5

Source: DANE. National Survey of Poverty and Quality of Life 1993.

THE GENERAL SITUATION OF WOMEN

Demographic data

According to the latest population census in 1993, Colombia has a total of 33,109,840 inhabitants, including 16,296,539 men and 16,813,301 women (50.8%). Unfortunately, the published results of the census do not break down the population by area of residence but only by the categories "capital" and "rest of country". In this classification the "capital" population accounts for 44.3 per cent (14,659,937) and "rest of country" for 55.7 per cent (18,449,903).

Education

It is difficult to break down the information on education in rural areas by sex (see the section of this report on article 10). However, it is possible to discern a tendency over the past two decades towards balance in the numbers of boys and girls enrolled in the basic education system. In terms of the average number of years of education of the population aged over 15, there is a wide gap between rural and urban dwellers: 3.9 as against 6.6 years respectively. Women show a slightly higher figure than men: 3.9 as against 3.8 years.

There has been a significant decline in illiteracy in Colombia even though almost a quarter of the rural population is illiterate. The highest rates are found among older women.

According to 1993 figures supplied by the Ministry of National Education, rural areas remain the most disadvantaged from the education standpoint. In that year the total enrolment rates were 77.8 per cent in urban and 22.2 per cent in rural areas.

With regard to the elimination of illiteracy, the 1993 population census recorded a national total of 3,694,307 illiterates, distributed as follows:

By sex: 1,877,751 men (50.8%) and 1,816,556 women (49.2%);

By area: 1,771,559 in the "chief towns" category (47.9%) and 1,922,748 in the "rest of country" category (52.1%);

By sex and area: oddly, the number of illiterates in the "rest of country" category is higher for men (53.4%) than for women (46.6%).

This topic is dealt with in greater detail in the section of the report on article 10.

Health

The health services reach only 56 per cent and antenatal services only 29.2 per cent of rural women. In addition, fertility rates remain higher in rural than in urban areas (4.3 and 2.5 respectively), and the average age at the birth of the first child is lower for rural women at 21 years (see the section of this report on article 12).

Access to land

Landholding in Colombia's farming areas is characterized by the concentration of farms in properties of under three hectares, which account for 70 per cent of the total. Only 16 per cent of this total belongs to the smallholding sector. According to the Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute (INCORA), 1.3 per cent of the landowners control 48 per cent of the best land, whereas 68 per cent of the owners in rural areas control 5.2 per cent of the occupied area.[69]

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[69] Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Plan Piloto de Atención Integral a Mujeres Rurales y Desplazadas por la Violencia. Discussion version, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1996.

Although there are no accurate data on the dynamics of the change in land ownership in recent decades, the violence and armed confrontation jeopardize the living conditions of the poorest farmers. The rate of migration owing to forced displacement of the rural inhabitants of the conflict areas has helped to accelerate the concentration of land in a few hands. According to the Episcopal Conference, between 1980 and 1994 some 600,000 people were displaced from the areas of armed conflict to the towns. Underlying this confrontation is a battle for ownership of the land and for the loyalty of the inhabitants of the conflict areas.

According to the findings of the 1993-1994 IICA survey of food production, 70 per cent of the households surveyed had land and had obtained it by legacy or purchase. A total of 43.3 per cent of the women in these households were landowners.[70] However, there is insufficient information to determine the demand for land by women farmers. The State agencies have few statistics on this topic, and those which are available do not treat the variables by sex.

Historically, women have been included in the INCORA land-grant policies. In 1967 it was established that rural farm credit should cover the wives and children of the recipients. In 1984 priority was given to women's farming organizations, including the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANMUCIC). And 1988 saw the enactment of Law 30 on the inclusion of single mothers in the land-award policies.

As a result of these policies the number of women awarded or holding title to land increased from 5.4 per cent in 1984 to 11.2 per cent in 1990.

Access to resources

Traditionally, most loans to small producers were made through the Agrarian Credit Fund, which, in implementation of the policy for rural women, created a line of credit for them, under which 4,297 loans were made between 1986 and 1990. In 1991 and 1992 women accounted for 18 per cent of the loans and 5.5 per cent of their value.[71]

Although the number of women receiving loans has increased, men remain the chief recipients. According to the IICA survey, more men than women seek loans: 60.8 per cent as against 39.2 per cent by women. But in practice applications from women are processed without any distinction as to sex. The same source states that women are more likely to be afraid of getting into debt and dubious about the bureaucratic procedures and lack of guarantees. These widespread attitudes illustrate country folk's dislike of taking risks.

Women heads of household

According to the 1995 National Household Survey, there has been an increase in the number of women heads of household in rural areas. This situation is more serious in the areas of settlement and of political and social conflict, where the figure rose to 26.6 per cent from 16.3 per cent in 1994, according to a study made by the Episcopate of Colombia. One obvious fact is that the incidence of poverty in such households is even higher when there are children aged under five.

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[70] Gaitán and Rugeles. Op. cit., p. 19.

[71] "Política para el Desarrollo de la Mujer Rural", quoted by Gaitán and Rugeles, op cit., p. 20.

THE WORK OF RURAL WOMEN

Women farmers and wage-earners

The number of women involved in all the branches of agricultural activity is increasing rapidly and in many different ways: a third of the producers and wage-earners responsible for farm output are women; by 2005 there will be exactly the same number of women as men employed in the sector.[72] This trend is due to various factors connected with the social and political violence, which has the greatest impact on men and produces a situation in which women farmers take possession of the plots on their own behalf or on behalf of their family, with men's work as waged farm workers or day labourers, and with the effects of the agrarian reform laws, which grant personal landowning rights to women.

The rural economy is still very important in Colombia, especially in respect of its 50 per cent contribution to food production. And almost 90 per cent of small producers are engaged in food production, including a large number of women.[73]

It can thus be argued that:

- Rural women do productive work as well as being responsible for housework, which constitutes a very heavy burden and takes up much of their time.

- By doing the housework women make it easier for the other members of the family to carry on their productive work and other activities.

- The agrarian crisis has caused an increase in the volume of work done by women, and with it heavy sacrifices, since women have been called upon to assume an increasing burden of directly paid productive work.

- The employment of women as wage-earners is associated with scant job training and low pay.

- The increasing tendency for rural men to become wage-earners means that every day there are more women working on the family plot, whereas the men are absent. Since men are working increasingly in non-farm jobs or as waged workers or day labourers on other properties, it is reasonable to assume that they may move away, while women are more likely to remain in the area.

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[72] Myriam Gutiérrez and J. Zapp. Mujer Semilla Alimento. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Presencia, 1995.

[73] Gaitán and Rugeles. Op. cit., pp. 2-3.

The typical rural arrangements of daily life[74] require women to play a double and sometimes a triple role, in which their household duties are superimposed on and mixed with their productive and other farm work. Since production is centred on the family unit, a sexual division of labour occurs.[75]

One of the most peculiar features of the work of rural women, cited by several authors,[76] is its "invisibility" and its social undervaluation, which are apparent, for example, in its omission from statistics. As late as the 1994 national household survey, although no significant differences were recorded between women and men in the population of working age (table 14.4), there was a big difference between the sexes with respect to the economically active population. This survey found a total of 10,588,542 persons of working age. Of this total, 5,356,455 were men (50.6%) and 5,232,087 were women (49.4%), whereas there was a total of 5,758,872 persons in the economically active population, including 4,119,238 men (71.5%) and only 1,639,634 women (28.5%).

This under-recording of women's work in the economically active population is due to the fact that the statistics do not count persons with domestic jobs, and this operates to the particular disadvantage of women doing farm work, when the production unit is the family. In fact, the domestic work done predominantly by women is fundamental to the reproduction of the family labour force and sustains the production of goods for sale. Without such work it would be impossible for the other members of the family to devote themselves fully to productive work as such. Therefore, women represent an indispensable although "invisible" support for the work done in the primary social nucleus, and if they are not remunerated it is because they are merely playing the role assigned to women in the rural culture.

In addition, there is a much higher proportion of employed men (73%) than employed women (26.7%), which helps to explain why more women are seeking jobs (58.4%) (table 14.4). This disparity may be pointing to the fact that in the rural sector women encounter greater difficulties in joining the labour market.

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[74] See in this connection, E. Wolf. Los Campesinos. Barcelona, Labor, 1978, p. 9 et. seq.; G. Foster. Las Culturas tradicionales y los cambios técnicos. Mexico City, Ed. Fondo de Cultura Econónica, 1988; and Gutiérrez and Zapp, 1995, op. cit.

[75] See, Wolf. op. cit.; Magdalena León. "La Mujer Rural y el Desarrollo del Capitalismo en el Agro Colombiano". In Revista Estudios Rurales Latinoamericanos, Vol. 2, January-April 1979; and F. Campillo. "El Poder para la Vida: las mujeres y la seguridad alimentaria". Photocopied material, 1996.

[76] See amongst others, Ulpiano Ayala. Mercado de Trabajo, Desigualdad y Pobreza en el Sector Rural Colombiano. Santa Fe de Bogotá, Misión de Estudios Agropecuarios, 1989.

Table 14.4

RURAL POPULATION BY POPULATION OF WORKING AGE (PWA) AND ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION (EAP), AND BY EMPLOYED, UNEMPLOYED AND ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE POPULATION (EIP), BY SEX, 1994

	MEN		WOMEN		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
TOTAL POPULATION	7 159 376	51.0	6 878 426	48.9	14 037 802	100
PWA	5 356 455	50.6	5 232 087	49.4	10 588 542	100
EAP	4 119 238	71.5	1 639 634	28.5	5 758 872	100
EMPLOYED	3 986 185	73.3	1 453 218	26.7	5 439 403	100
UNEMPLOYED	133 053	41.6	186 416	58.4	319 469	100
EIP	1 237 217	25.6	3 592 435	74.8	4 829 670	100

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

Domestic work and secondary activities

In order to produce a more accurate picture of the work of rural women, it is necessary to review, on the one hand, the EIP statistics in so far as they relate to domestic work, and, on the other hand, secondary activities by sex, since both categories contain a high proportion of women which is not normally recorded in the EAP statistics. This is because their work contribution is not recognized statistically.

The EIP includes 2,498,060 women doing domestic work, as against only 39,884 men, figures which offset the differences by sex in the EAP (table 14.4). In fact, if the women doing domestic work included in the EIP (table 14.5) are added to the 1,639,634 women actually recorded in the EAP, the result is a total of 4,137,694, which is close to the total of 4,119,238 for active men.

Table 14.5

RURAL ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE POPULATION WITH HOUSEHOLD DUTIES, BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN
No.	2 537 291	39 884	2 498 060
%	100	1.6	98.4

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

Table 14.6
RURAL ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE POPULATION WITH HOUSEHOLD DUTIES, BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

AGE GROUP	MEN		WOMEN	
	No.	%	No.	%
10-11	5 663	14.2	28 006	1.1
12-14	9 676	24.3	106 199	4.3
15-19	9 902	24.8	215 456	8.6
20-24	1 332	3.3	277 158	11.1
25-29	477	1.2	272 948	10.9
30-34	396	0.1	262 749	10.5
35-39	663	1.6	234 619	9.4
40-44	1 386	3.5	208 305	8.3
45-49	177	0.5	165 013	6.6
50-54	1 616	4.0	174 015	6.9
55-59	1 114	2.8	147 240	5.9
60-64	1 231	3.1	135 128	5.4
65+	6 251	15.7	271 224	10.9
TOTAL	39 884	100	2 498 060	100

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

It is also possible to identify power relationships by age and sex in the performance of "domestic work" in rural households (table 14.6). For example, the work attributed to men is done by youths and boys, and the amount of such work which they do declines in the intermediate age groups (25 to 50) but increases again when they reach old age. The 25-35 age groups account for the largest numbers of women doing domestic work; again there is a decline between the ages of 35 and 60 and an increase after 65.

Furthermore, according to the 1994 National Household Survey, of the total of 1,492,322 persons doing secondary work, 79.4 per cent are women and only 20.6 per cent men. Women combine domestic work as such with tending the crops and the animals.

This additional contribution by women is usually connected with livestock and is almost always done from the home; it is thus interwoven with domestic work although, unlike domestic work, it does provide a cash income. The combination of domestic work with secondary activities in the household context constitutes a contribution by women to the family's survival strategies, for it produces higher incomes without the need to abandon household work.

To conclude, when the work done by women is added to their domestic work recorded in the EIP statistics, the result is comparable with the volume of productive work done by men.

Furthermore, women's secondary activities are usually in commerce and services, and the destinations of their output are consumption and sales and household consumption, so that they thus help to meet the family's daily survival needs (table 14.7).

Table 14.7

RURAL POPULATION WITH SOME SECONDARY ACTIVITY BY DESTINATION OF OUTPUT AND BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

DESTINATION OF OUTPUT BY SEX	MAIN JOB		
	CONSTRUCTION	COMMERCE	SERVICES
MEN	9 187	15 280	12 028
Consumption and sales	-	4 589	400
Household consumption	179	-	5 176
Sales	725	10 359	2 545
Improvements	8 283	332	3 847
WOMEN	1 280	37 559	22 144
Consumption and sales	-	17 514	2 560
Household consumption	-	2 146	9 759
Sales	-	17 899	2 647
Improvements	1 820	-	7 078

Source: 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

Food production

Women also make a large contribution to food production.[77] According to the data of the IICA survey,[78] women are entirely responsible for product processing and production of handicrafts; there are twice as many women as men working with livestock (67.8% against 32.2%) and women are almost as active as men in agriculture (42.2% against 57.8%). They also play an equal or slightly bigger part in commercial activities (51% against 49%); and there is a high proportion of women wage-earners (34.9%) although men (65%) outnumber them by almost 2 to 1 (table 14.8).

The IICA survey (table 14.8) also shows the part played by women in the sale and marketing of farm goods and confirms that small-scale farming (where women food producers are found) is a commercial activity, in which a high proportion of plot output is marketed. In this case the goods are potatoes, corn, plantain and yucca, the products highlighted in the survey.

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[77] The woman food producer, according to the IICA study, is a woman who engages in rural economic activities, lives on the plot and shares with her family the work, decisions, successes and failures of the household unit.

[78] This survey was carried out between 1993 and 1994 as part of the Programme for Analysis of the Policies of the Agricultural Sector with respect to women food producers in the Andean Region, the Southern Cone and the Caribbean. It involved 150 women food producers in 21 municipalities in four micro-regions representative of the small-farm production of potatoes, corn, plantain and milk in households farming less than 20 hectares of land.

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Table 14.8
CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRODUCTIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES BY SEX AND BY REAL CASH AND NON-CASH INCOME, 1993
(percentages)

WORK	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Agriculture	57.8	42.2	100.0
Livestock	32.2	67.8	100.0
Agri. processing	0.0	100.0	100.0
Commerce	49.0	51.0	100.0
Handicrafts	0.0	100.0	100.0
Wage-earners	65.1	34.9	100.0
Total	49.4	50.6	100.0
Domestic	4.4	95.6	100.0

Source: IICA survey, 1993. In Gaitán and Rugeles. Op. cit.

Table 14.9
OUTPUT SOLD AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SALES OF POTATOES, CORN BANANAS AND YUCCA IN THE 1992-93 FARM YEAR
(percentages)

PRODUCT	% OUTPUT SOLD	SOLD BY				
		WOMEN	MEN	BOTH	OTHERS	TOTAL
Potatoes	91	10	37	53	-	100
Corn	92	17	62	19	2	100
Plantain	88	19	69	10	2	100
Yucca	78	19	69	12	-	100
Dairy	-	85	-	15	-	100

Source: IICA survey. In Gaitán and Rugeles. Op. cit

Table 14.10
SOME INDICATORS OF THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE FARM GOODS MARKET, 1993
(percentages)

ACTIVITY	WOMEN	MEN
Percentage of working hours devoted to non-farm commerce	3.1	
Percentage participation of women in:		
Amounts to be sold	45	55
Place of sale and type of purchases	31	69
Use of cash income	41	59

Source: 11CA Survey. In Gaitán and Rugeles. Op. cit.

With regard to the role of these women in the marketing of the goods, "it must be emphasized that women farmers continue to use the informal and less specialized marketing channels such as sales on the property, in the neighbourhood and in the local retail market".[79] Women are also involved in decisions as to the quantities to be sold, the places of sale and use of the income, although to a lesser extent than men (tables 14.9 and 14.10).

Use of time

The large volume of domestic work and secondary activities connected with production in the household shows that women spend long hours working at various daily tasks (table 14.11). It is difficult for them to find time for personal and leisure activities. In the following table there is strikingly little time shown in the categories "other activities" and "study"; this indicates that the lives of these women are almost entirely taken up with the maintenance, care and support of the family, to the detriment of other activities perhaps more closely connected to their own personal development.

Table 14.11
DAILY USE OF TIME BY WOMEN, 1993

ACTIVITY	HOURS/DAY	% of total
Agriculture	2.47	18.2
Livestock	1.60	11.7
Agri. processing	0.78	5.7
Wage-earners	0.46	3.4
Handicrafts	0.40	2.9
Commerce	0.32	2.3
Other activities	0.14	1.0
Study	0.04	0.3
Domestic	7.39	54.3
Total	13.57	100

Source: 1993 IICA Survey. In Gaitán and Rugeles. Op. cit..

The women food producers identified in the IICA survey use their time in the following order: domestic work; farm and livestock work; processing of farm goods. This indicates that rural women spend much of their time at various tasks including domestic work, harvesting, and tending animals. Some of them also combine work in the home with waged work.

The long hours worked are associated with a great expenditure of physical effort owing to such factors as the lack of services and technological devices and equipment, which is typical of Colombia's rural areas. In fact, life in the countryside entails additional work such as carrying water, disposing of wastes, gathering wood, etc.

Employment

The changes in the focus of Colombia's economic policies are imposing new conditions on the rural economy, which have been described above. In fact, the equality of the terms of competition implied by the chosen development model has led to the removal of a number of protectionist measures and has opened up the country's frontiers to foreign farm goods enjoying comparative advantages in their competition with local goods. This has brought about the crisis of big and small agricultural producers. "Food imports practically doubled from 1.3 million tons in 1990 to 2.1 million in 1992, particularly imports of cereals and grains...This highlights the situation of small producers, for they are the major contributors to farm output, which takes a little over half their production, accounts for 62.7 per cent of the cultivated area, and contributes 58.6 per cent of the value of production".[80]

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[79] Gaitán and Rugeles. Op. cit., p. 14.

Against this background, women work mostly in activities connected with services, commerce and agriculture. They are employed principally in the "own-account" and "domestic service" categories. There are more women than men in own-account farm work, unpaid family work, and waged employment (table 14.12). Women outnumber men in the commerce, services and industry branches (table 14.13), while more men are employed as day labourers in agriculture. These differences between the employment of men and women may reflect the differences observed in the male and female social roles determined by their cultural upbringing and by the scant training of women for skilled or semi-skilled work.[81]

Table 14.12
DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL EMPLOYED POPULATION BY TYPE OF JOB AND BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994
(percentages)

	TOTAL	DAY LABOURER	EMPLOYEE	DOMESTIC EMPLOYEE	EMPLOYER	OWN-ACCOUNT	UNPAID FAMILY WORKER
MEN	100	41.7	14.9	0.2	5.1	30.9	7.4
WOMEN	100	9.7	25.9	12.1	2.6	36.7	12.7

Source: ENHR, 1994; DANE, 1995.

Table 14.13 illustrates the changes between 1980 and 1994 in share in employment by branch of activity and by sex. The number of women doubled in commerce and services, confirming their increasing dominance in these categories, and fell in industry. There was a significant drop in the numbers of men and women working in agriculture.

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[80] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[81] The problems of job training are common to the whole country but they are more acute in rural areas and in the case of women; this is one of the reasons for the backwardness of the production system and for the large volume of cheap and poorly qualified labour. Formal education does not provide job training. This situation has been exacerbated by the isolation of education from the world of work in most Latin American countries - one of the reasons for the drop-out of many boys and girls from basic education. There is thus no direct relation between levels of education and job qualifications. For more information on this topic, see M. A. Gallart, V. M. Gómez, M. De Ibarrola, E. Weis, C. Turbay, etc.

Attention must be drawn to the small rises for both men and women in the industry category, indicating stagnation in this branch of the economy in the past decade. On the other hand, the increase in commerce and services highlights the importance of these branches in the provision of jobs and the growth of these sectors of the economy, which include a number of informal activities.

Table 14.13
DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL EMPLOYED POPULATION BY BRANCH OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND BY SEX, 1980 AND 1994
(percentages)

BRANCH OF ACTIVITY	1980		1994	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
AGRICULTURE	82.1	46.3	65.8	23.5
MINING	2.1	4.9	1.8	1.8
E/G/W	5.1	20.2	5.5	10.9
CONSTRUCTION	0.1	-	0.4	0.1
COMMERCE	2.1	-	4.8	0.3
TRANSPORT	3.6	11.9	9.1	24.9
FIN. SERVS.	1.5	0.3	4.4	0.9
SERVICES	0.1	0.5	0.9	0.9
	2.5	15.9	7.6	36.6
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

It is also important to emphasize the large numbers of women working in services (36.6%), commerce (24.9%), and agriculture (23.5%) (table 14.13). This would point to their recent entry into the waged labour force in low-skill jobs.

On the other hand, the numbers of women employed as waged farm labourers or day labourers confirm that they are seeking the type of work which they have been doing on their plot, although without pay. In fact, the hiring figures seem to show that this kind of work provides men and women with greater economic security. This can be seen by comparing the branch of farming with own-account work and work as waged or day labourer. The number of people working in agriculture as labourers is greater than the number doing this kind of work on their own account. This may also be indicating changes in the forms of landholding and of the hiring of labour for farm work.

Table 14.14 confirms that more women work in services, commerce and sales, and more men in non-agricultural jobs.

Table 14.14
DISTRIBUTION OF THE RURAL EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAIN JOB GROUP AND BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994
(percentages)

	MAIN JOB GROUP								
	TOTAL	PROF. & TECH.	MAN./ CIVIL SERV.	ADMIN. ASST.	SHOP/ SALES	SERVICES	AGRIC.	NON-AGRIC.	NOT SPECIFIED/ NO INFO.
MEN	100	2.3	0.4	2.0	6.6	4.2	64.2	19.0	1.3
WOMEN	100	8.3	0.1	5.6	18.2	32.5	21.9	13.1	0.1

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

Education standards of the employed population

The education standards of the rural employed population are generally low. The commonest levels are primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary. There is still a large proportion (13.2%) with no education at all (table 14.15).

Table 14.15
RURAL ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

EDUCATION LEVEL	MEN	%	WOMEN	%	TOTAL	%
NONE	584 276	14.2	173 638	10.6	757 914	13.2
PRIMARY	2 593 489	62.9	872 669	53.2	3 455 158	60.2
SECONDARY	844 683	20.5	508 159	30.9	1 352 822	23.5
HIGHER	86 233	2.1	79 250	4.8	165 483	2.8
NO. INF.	10 557	0.2	5 938	0.4	16 495	0.3
TOTAL	4 119 238	100	1 639 634	100	5 758 872	100

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

When the education levels of the employed population are compared by sex, it is interesting to note the success of women in education above the basic primary level. While most of the men are found at the primary level, women exhibit a better distribution between primary and secondary. In addition, the proportion of men in the "none" category is higher (14.2%) than the proportion of women (10.6%).

Despite the progress made by women in education, there are differences by sex and by rural or urban location in the quality of the available education. In the baccalaureate examinations boys' schools achieve better results from the quality standpoint than girls' schools, as already pointed out in the section on education. Girls' schools and rural schools have also been the least successful with respect to job training in the formal education system. Girls are usually offered only outdated training in commercial activities, including "secretarial work" and, to a lesser extent,

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"social work".[82]

Remuneration

According to the 1994 National Household Survey, low wages are the rule in the rural sector as a whole and constitute one of the reasons for the lower living standards. Once again it is rural women who earn the least: while most male earnings fall in the range from 0.5 up to two minimum monthly wages (23.2%), women account for 20.8 per cent in this range and are found in greater numbers in the group receiving no payment. They account for 14.4 per cent of this latter group, while the figure for men is 9.3 per cent. The average income of women is under two minimum wages.

Men and women professionals and technicians are better paid, since these jobs require qualifications, but there are very few rural workers employed in this category.

Furthermore, although there are large numbers of women employed in services, men receive higher incomes in this category. In the services category there are larger numbers of men in the range of one to two minimum wages (19%), while the women doing the same type of work are found mostly in the under 0.5 category (36.9%) (table 14.16).

Table 14.16
DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAIN JOB GROUP AND MONTHLY INCOME, AND BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994
(percentages)

MONTHLY INCOME IN MINIMUM WAGES	PROF & TECH.	MAN./CIVIL SERV.	ADMIN. ASST.	SHOP/ SALES	SERVICES	AGRIC.
MEN	100	100	100	100	100	100
No info.	6.8	11.4	18.5	7.7	11.2	7.5
No wage	9.3	0.5	0.7	0.3	9.6	2.6
<0.5	8.2	1.9	0.6	7.2	3.8	4.4
0.5 to <1	23.2	4.1	3.9	21.6	7.4	19.9
1 to <2	22.7	28.0	9.5	41.8	13.2	42.0
2 to <3	5.2	20.0	10.4	14.1	5.6	7.9
3 to <5	5.9	15.9	19.4	5.4	7.7	4.5
5 to <8	5.5	5.5	12.9	0.9	9.6	2.9
8 to <10	3.1	1.7	-	-	5.3	1.4
10 and more	10.0	10.7	24.1	0.9	26.6	6.8

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[82] For more information on this topic and the relevant statistics, see V. M. Gómez and others. Estudio Cualitativo del Modelo INEM de Diversificación en la Educación Media Colombiana. Social Studies Centre (CES), Santa Fe de Bogotá, National University of Colombia, 1996. See also the section of this report on article 10.

WOMEN	100	100	100	100	100	100
No info.	6.8	9.1	-	6.2	8.4	5.1
No wage	14.4	0.7	31.0	0.4	20.2	6.1
<0.5	17.2	3.2	-	7.5	7.1	36.9
0.5 to <1	13.9	6.6	-	12.1	10.2	16.8
1 to <2	20.8	50.0	22.7	55.2	15.1	13.9
2 to <3	7.4	20.0	13.8	15.5	6.7	4.4
3 to <5	7.5	7.3	19.7	1.8	9.8	6.3
5 to <8	5.7	0.9	-	0.4	7.3	7.0
8 to <10	1.5	0.2	-	0.7	2.8	0.6
10 and more	4.7	1.7	12.6	0.2	12.2	2.9

Source: 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

Payment in kind

Here there are no major differences between men and women, but the valuation of payments in kind point to very low remuneration. This kind of payment usually represents a means of family subsistence which, for example, makes it harder for a lease to be cancelled when payment is made by providing accommodation. It also suggests the existence of families which include among their means of survival living in the property of persons not resident in the area, in which they work as "caretakers", using the output of the plot for their own consumption. Under such arrangements any profits from the sale of the output go to the owners.[83]

Table 14.17
DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL EMPLOYED POPULATION PAID IN KIND, BY MONTHLY INCOME AND BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

		PAYMENT IN KIND			
	TOTAL	FOOD	HOUSING	FOOD/HOUSING	NONE
MEN	100	21.9	8.0	6.5	63.6
WOMEN	100	26.0	3.1	10.8	60.0

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

The wage differentials by sex in the population receiving payment in kind confirms that women are at a disadvantage with respect to income from work. The category of under 0.5 minimum wages has 31.4 per cent of the women but only 13.8 per cent of the men (table 14.18).

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[83] There is little information available on the changes in the forms of landholding and in labour and contractual relations in Colombian farming.

Table 14.18
DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL EMPLOYED POPULATION PAID IN KIND, BY MONTHLY INCOME EXPRESSED AS MINIMUM WAGES, AND BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994
(percentages)

MONTHLY INCOME IN MINIMUM WAGES	MEN	WOMEN
TOTAL	100	100
No information	4.9	5.2
No wages	0.1	0.4
< 0.5	13.8	31.4
0.5 to <1	39.1	22.3
1 to <2	35.0	32.0
2 to <3	4.2	6.3
3 to <5	2.1	1.9
5 to <8	0.6	0.2
8 to <10	0.1	0.04
10 and more	0.2	0.2

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

Unemployment

Rural unemployment has fluctuated in the 1990s so far: in 1992 and 1993 it fell sharply as a result of the agrarian crisis but recovered slightly in 1994 (table 14.19).

Table 14.19
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 1991-1994

NOV-DEC 1991	SEPT. 1992	SEPT. 1993	SEPT. 1994
4.2%	-3.7%	-4.0%	1.4%

Source: Ocampo and Perry. Op. cit.

According to DANE, the sector's decline has had a greater effect on rural women, who have an unemployment rate of 11.37 per cent, as against 3.23 per cent for men (table 14.20).

Table 14.20
SPECIFIC RATES OF EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT, BY SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

	GROSS RATE	GLOBAL RATE	TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT	TOTAL UNDEREMPLOYMENT
MEN	57.54	76.90	3.23	14.16
WOMEN	23.84	31.34	11.37	13.67

Source: 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

In the case of underemployment, the high rates for both men and women may indicate that large numbers of them work in the informal sectors and that employment is precarious in rural areas.

With regard to the level of education of the unemployed (table 14.21), the women are better educated than the men, showing particularly good figures in secondary and higher education. These figures do not indicate any major differences in the level of education of the employed and the unemployed populations.

Table 14.21
RURAL UNEMPLOYED POPULATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL, AGE GROUP AND SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

		EDUCATION LEVEL				
	TOTAL	NONE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	HIGHER	NO INF.
MEN	133 033	14 575	66 799	48 609	3 070	-
%	100	10.9	50.2	36.5	2.7	-
WOMEN	186 416	8 825	84 788	85 174	7 539	90
%	100	4.7	45.5	45.7	4.0	0.05

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

With regard to the occupations in which jobs are sought (table 14.22), rural women want to work mainly as domestic servants and in jobs connected with commerce and sales. This may reflect a projection of the traditional female roles, in which the labour market accepts women and is more able to accommodate them.

It is a matter of urgency to investigate and obtain more information about the specific topics of rural women's unemployment and their search for work. One striking aspect of this table is the declared intention to find work in administrative jobs, probably in the civil service and carrying low status.

Table 14.22
RURAL UNEMPLOYED POPULATION, BY TARGET JOB GROUP AND SEX, SEPTEMBER 1994

TARGET JOB GROUP	TOTAL	%	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
PROF. & TECH.	12 087	3.8	1 969	1.5	10 118	5.4
MAN./CIVIL SERV.	2 008	0.6	1 758	1.3	250	0.1
ADMIN. ASST.	39 175	12.3	10 263	7.7	28 912	15.5
COMM. & SALES	38 133	11.9	9 248	7.0	28 885	15.5
SERVICES	88 758	27.8	9 159	6.9	79 599	42.7
AGRICULTURAL	80 266	25.1	59 590	44.8	20 676	11.1
NON-AGRICULTURAL	55 049	17.2	38 418	28.9	16 631	8.9
NOT SPECIFIED/NO INF.	3 993	1.2	2 648	1.9	1 345	0.7
TOTAL	319 469	100	133 053	100	186 416	100

Source: Based on the 1994 National Survey of Rural Households.

To sum up, the statistics and studies on rural women confirm the impact of the agricultural crisis, which manifests itself in their precarious situation and unfavourable social and working conditions. Furthermore, although large numbers of women work and invest much time in productive and reproductive activities, their remuneration in wages or in kind is lower than that of men.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR RURAL WOMEN

Institutions

Since 1984 the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has had a technical group responsible for policies and programmes for women; it has gradually been consolidated and has now become the Rural Women's Office in the Office of the Deputy Minister for Rural Development, and included in the Ministry's staffing table and regular budget.

The creation of this Office, which resulted from the restructuring of the Rural Investment Cofinancing Fund (DRI Fund), now allows attention to be given to women in all the Ministry's programmes. In the agricultural sector, the other decentralized bodies have technical units or groups responsible for incorporating equality for women in their specific policies and programmes. One of the functions of the Central Office is to furnish technical support to the sector's specialized units in order to achieve the targets which have been set.

The agencies of the agricultural sector have created committees to monitor and evaluate the plan to adapt institutions to implement the programmes for rural women falling within each agency's competence. Such committees exist at present in the DRI Fund, INPA, INCORA, INAC, IDEMA, ICA, CORPOICA and FINAGRO.

Policies and strategies

In 1984 the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development drew up a policy for rural women, which was the first policy approved by CONPES. In 1993 this topic was taken up again by the Government with the adoption of a new policy for the development of rural women, which acknowledges the persistence of the problems identified under the previous policies and has adjusted its objectives to the new context of decentralization of the State and to the progress made in institution-building by the agencies in the sector.

In this context, the new policy emphasizes the need to reinforce planning based on equality for women in view of the urgency of integrating women's requirements in the decentralization process, removing the obstacles to their access to productive resources, and improving their work qualifications and participation in competitive projects.

At present the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM), adopted in 1994, is one of the strategies of the development model based on economic growth with social equity. EPAM provides a general framework for mainstreaming equality for women in all the programmes of the sector's institutions.

One of the most important aspects of the formulation of EPAM and of the specific policy for rural women is the intention to mainstream gender analysis and the perspective of equality for women in the activities of the various State agencies. This new dimension stems from the "...recognition that there are differences between the functions performed by men and women with respect to their family responsibilities and productive and community work".[84]

The strategies are the result of a debate on the situation of women, public policies on the provision of basic services, removal of obstacles to women's access to resources, and their involvement in jobs programmes. They are designed fundamentally to improve the quality of life of rural women, provide them with equal opportunities to participate in the sectoral strategies and in the bodies in which decisions affecting community and political life are taken, improve their access to and control of productive resources, and increase their incomes.[85]

The Rural Women's Office of the Ministry of Agriculture and its affiliated offices work within the following strategies:

Adaptation of the institutions of the agricultural sector (DRI Fund, ICA, CORPOICA, INPA, INAT, Agrarian Credit Fund, COMCAJA and INCORA)

The aim is to adapt the services of the institutions of the agricultural sector to the needs of women by improving the poor cover of the services and overcoming their fundamental lack of relevance to women's requirements.

Adaptation of local bodies

Support is furnished to the departmental and municipal administrations to provide them with planning tools incorporating equality for women so that they can formulate relevant agricultural development plans and programmes which involve women and take account of their needs.

Improving the participation and organization of rural women

Activities in this area have focused on training rural leaders in the procedures for discussion and decision-making and on the response capacity of the public and private sectors with respect to project formulation.

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[84] Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. La Mujer y el Desarrollo Rural. Política de Modernización Agropecuaria y Rural. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1994-1998.

[85] Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Política para el Desarrollo de la Mujer Rural. CONPES/Social/UDA/DNP document, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 21 January 1994.

Communication

A communication strategy was drawn up for the development of rural women with a view to securing their equality with men and changing the cultural traditions which discriminate against rural women and conceal the triple role which they play in rural life.

Productive projects for the generation of jobs and incomes

The aim is to establish the necessary conditions for women's productive projects to have equitable access to the resources necessary for their economic success. These projects also seek to create the institutional machinery to bring an end to the situation in which women's services are marginalized and suffer from poor technical quality and precarious funding.[86]

Programmes in operation

These programmes are being carried out by the Ministry's affiliated agencies, providing the following activities and cover in 1995 (table 14.23):

Table 14.23
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY AGENCIES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, 1995[87]

AGENCY	No. of women assisted	Amount (pesos)	Assisted with:
DRI Fund	12 500	1 249 000 000	83 cofinanced projects for women's organizations
INCORA	1 431		7 023 h. awarded to women heads of family. 20 900 h. of uncultivated common land transferred to women heads of family
INPA	280	163 500 000	17 fish-farming demonstration projects
INAT	1 530		Women heads of family involved in irrigation districts; 65 participants in district management boards
IDEMA	300	47 500 000	30 organizations headed by women received social credits

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[86] Ibid., 1995.

[87] Acronyms: DRI Fund - Rural Investment Cofinancing Fund; INCORA - Columbian Agrarian Reform Institute; INPA - National Fisheries and Agriculture Institute; INAT - National Land Development Institute; IDEMA - Agricultural Marketing Institute; CORPOICA - Columbian Agricultural Research Corporation.

Agrarian Credit Fund	8 146 103 342	31.95% 145 830 940 337	Women heads of family; subsidies under the "Vivir Mejor" Programme; 1 women's consumption portfolio for 129,076 bonds, consolidated to March 1995
CORPOICA	No direct users	110 000 000	Implementing four pilot projects on determination of production systems with a gender approach

Source: The report "Mujer Semilla de Alimentos. Estadísticas sobre la Mujer". Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Employment

In 1994-1995 the Government began the work of incorporating women in the National Rural Employment Plan, the Support Programme for Rural Micro-Enterprises, the Emergency Rural Employment Programme, and the Job Training Programme. The Ministry has been endeavouring to ensure that women have at least a 30 per cent participation in all these programmes.

Improving productivity

The DRI Fund carries out measures to support rural women in the development of productive projects and increase their participation in decision-making bodies at the community, municipal, regional and national levels, in an effort to overcome the existing socio-cultural constraints.

The Rural Women's Office, created in 1992 by the DRI Fund as an agency of its General Administration, is in the process of identifying and designing conceptual, methodological and operational tools for incorporating the gender perspective in the work of other bodies such as the municipal technical assistance units (UMATA), the cofinancing units (UDECO), and the local indigenous agencies (ETI).

In 1994 the cofinancing units provided training for staff of municipal agencies in the formulation, management, development and assessment of projects from the gender perspective.

In 1994 an agreement was signed between IICA, the National Planning Department and the Ministry on the introduction of the policy for the development of rural women.

Also in 1995, Decree 166 established the Rural Organization and Training Fund (CAPACITAR) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Its main function is to fund training projects for the rural population and the black and indigenous communities. These projects are intended to boost the development of rural organizations and involve them in the modernization of the agriculture and fisheries sector, strengthen their response capacity in accordance with the commitment to give a lead to the changes in their communities, and publicize the Ministry's policies on access to the resources and services of its affiliated and associated agencies.

Rural women are a priority target of CAPACITAR (in addition to young people and rural organizations) "...since this population group is still marginalized from decision-making despite its importance for the stability of the family structure and community life and for production".[88]

CORPOICA and the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) are implementing a plan to adapt the technical assistance models so that they can respond to the specific needs of women. There is an obvious need, for example, to introduce appropriate technologies in the household to ease the domestic burden and increase the time which women can devote to productive activities which will generate regional economies of scale.[89]

CORPOICA gives priority to research and study of the transfer of technology and includes equality for women in both activities. ICA is concerned with the promotion of women's participation in prevention and control programmes in the areas of animal and plant health.

Access to resources

In 1991 the Financing Fund for the Agriculture Sector (FINAGRO) and the National Commission on Agricultural Credit (CNCA) began operations to "...meet the demand from small agricultural producers, whether women or men".[90] This agency also coordinates its activities under the policy for rural women with the DRI Fund.

Starting in the second half of 1993, the Agricultural Guarantees Fund (FAG), administered by FINAGRO, was authorized to issue "guarantee certificates" to support the small-producer loans made by financial intermediaries to rural women.

In addition, FINAGRO and the other agencies involved in the implementation of the credit policies for rural women have encouraged the incorporation of the sex variable in the collection of statistics, for the failure to do this in the past is still impeding the evaluation of the achievements of and the obstacles to the advancement of women.

In addition to the granting of loans, training programmes have been introduced in order to ensure that the loans are used efficiently and to enhance the women's quality of life and productivity. The orientation and implementation of these programmes are based on determination of the viability of the productive projects submitted to FINAGRO and FAG by loan applicants.

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[88] Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Organización y capacitación campesina. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1996.

[89] Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. La Mujer y el Desarrollo Rural. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1996.

[90] "Enfoque de Género en el Desarrollo Rural". FINAGRO, Boletín No. 4, 14 November 1994. Small producer means "a natural person possessing total assets, including those of the spouse, not exceeding 14,310,225 pesos (for 1995) and obtaining two thirds of his or her income from farming or having 75 per cent of his or her assets invested in the agriculture sector". Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 1996.

Law 160 of 1994 is designed principally to ensure that priority is given to women heads of household, as described earlier, as well as to other women lacking social and economic protection owing to the violence, desertion and widowhood, and lacking their own land or sufficient land. Within this legal framework INCORA has been giving priority to such women in its grants of land. In 1995, as an example of progress in the achievement of equality, INCORA reported that it had awarded a total of 7,023 hectares and granted title to 20,900 hectares to women heads of household.

Women heads of household

Women heads of household have been treated as a priority group in the various sectoral programmes. They are given priority in the lending policies of the Agrarian Credit Fund in its "Vivir Mejor" programme, which finances improvements in the physical structure of housing, as well as in a number of other projects: loans for productive projects in coordination with FINAGRO; award of land by INCORA, both uncultivated common land and land bought directly from the State; and the INAT projects on the management of local irrigation.

Action plan for rural women

In matters of rural development the Ministry of Agriculture seeks and coordinates the support of other ministries and decentralized agencies with a view to satisfying the needs of the countryside in education, health, nutrition, basic sanitation and housing.

Its Rural Women's Office drew up the Plan of Action 1996-1997 to secure equality in rural development, giving priority to:

- Providing the conditions for rural women to play a part in the modernization of the countryside;

- Determining strategies to eliminate the obstacles to the more equitable participation of women in the sectoral programmes;

- Incorporating the main aspects of the Policy for Equality and Participation of Women (EPAM) and of the commitments undertaken by Colombia at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

This plan has four action strategies:

* Generating more and new rural jobs. The aim is to increase the supply of permanent employment by promoting the participation of women in projects on the development of fish-farming, the inclusion of rural women in the national plan for micro-enterprises, crop substitution, and modernization of production techniques. It is also seeking to increase the supply of seasonal jobs.

* Adaptation of the services provided by institutions. This is concerned with the identification and removal of obstacles to increased access by women to productive resources, and with the creation of statistical data bases broken down by sex.

* Boosting the demand from rural women. This is being done by publicizing the institutional services available and identifying and removing social obstacles hindering the access of rural women to these services.

* Pilot plan on integrated services for rural women and women displaced by the violence.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

Rural women are disadvantaged in comparison with rural men and urban women: they are among the poorest members of the population; they bear heavy work burdens and receive low remuneration; they work long days; they have poor job qualifications; they are more seriously affected by unemployment problems; and they are one of the most vulnerable social groups affected by the agrarian crisis and the violence and armed conflict in Colombia. These factors impair their quality of life.

With regard to the employment and incomes of rural women, attention is drawn to:

* An increasing trend towards waged employment, particularly in services and commerce.

* A higher unemployment rate for women (11.37%) than for men (3.23%) in 1994.

* Large numbers of women doing secondary work: 79.45 per cent as against 20.6 per cent for men.

* Women's virtually sole responsibility for domestic work.

* Women's great contribution to the survival of the nuclear family through waged work and their biological reproduction and social functions.

In recent years social policies for rural women have made progress with respect to:

* Greater institutional awareness of the topic in the Ministry of Agriculture and the sector's other agencies, so that today there exists an institutional basis which can be built upon but which requires support if it is to play a decisive role in the cause of equality for women.

* There is a greater political consensus that rural women are a group requiring special attention, and this has led to the approval of specific policies and legislation which treat women as direct beneficiaries. However, the cover of the services and the access to resources are still very limited.

* There is a greater awareness in the institutions of the need to devise instruments and mechanisms for the mainstreaming of women. Implementation is

proceeding very slowly owing to the influence of a civil service culture unfavourable to women's interests.

* The formulation of an action plan for rural women by the Rural Women's Office, and the design of specific programmes for women heads of household and women displaced by the violence and the armed conflict.

The following difficulties have been encountered in the implementation of these policies:

* The fact that the programmes have had a greater impact on the awareness and organization of women than on their capacity to produce and improve their incomes.

* The instability of the lead agency in the agricultural sector and the precariousness of the resources for the implementation of the policies for the effective mainstreaming of women.

* The still-limited reach of the services and programmes in relation to the numbers of poor and vulnerable people.

* The lack of information broken down by sex in the national data bases and sectoral information systems.

* The constraints associated with the dominant socio-cultural factors in rural society and in the attitude of civil servants, which affect women by denying them access to information about their rights and the sectoral plans and programmes.

* The limited training arrangements for civil servants and possibly the lack of suitable training methods, which obstruct the incorporation of equality for women in their daily activities.

EQUALITY OF WOMEN BEFORE THE LAW

Article 15

> "1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.
>
> 2.States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.
>
> 3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.
>
> 4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the

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freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW WITH RESPECT TO LEGAL CAPACITY

Colombia's Constitution guarantees the equality of all persons before the law, prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex, and establishes the equality of rights and opportunities of men and women. It also affirms the right of both sexes to access to the administration of justice.

In 1974 the civil law established the equality of rights and obligations of men and women, so that since that date women have had full legal capacity, in particular to conclude contracts and administer their property, in accordance with the Convention. If any law seeks to limit that capacity, it is considered null and void because its purpose is unlawful. However, it must be said that this full legal capacity is affected and diminished in practice by socio-economic factors.

Colombia has no studies which would help to assess the true legal capacity of women with respect to entering into contractual relations or to the free administration of their property. Nor has any research been carried out to determine whether they receive unequal treatment because of their sex when they appear before the courts as lawyers, parties or witnesses.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND CHOICE OF RESIDENCE

Colombian women have the right to move freely within and outside the country and to choose their residence. With regard to the conjugal residence, the civil law stipulates that it should be determined by common agreement between the spouses. In the event of disagreement, the place of residence is determined by a judge in the light of the interests of the family.

Accordingly, controversy was aroused by the ruling of the Constitutional Court on the content of a 1989 Treaty (ratified in 1992), which *inter alia* establishes the residence of the husband or former husband as the residence of the married or separated woman when there is no conjugal residence. On that occasion the formal consideration that the Treaty should be observed because it had been ratified before the entry into force of the 1991 Constitution won the day, notwithstanding the discriminatory effects on women and the implied subordination of women to their husbands. While it is true that this Treaty does not now have any great practical effect, given the primacy of the principle of equality at both national and international levels, the majority position of the Court and its insensitivity on this issue are striking when compared with other issues on which it decided in favour of the rights of women.

In addition, Law 258 of 1996 stipulates, for the purposes of protecting the family home, that immovable property used as the family home may be alienated or encumbered only with the consent by signature of both spouses. The purpose of this legislation is to protect women, since for them the home constitutes an area of family stability. Therefore, the legislation has a positive effect by preventing a man from disposing of the home unilaterally and without considering the position of his wife.

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However, it must be remembered that there are increasing numbers of women heads of household, and that in such cases this measure creates difficulties precisely because the woman is head of the household owing to the abdication of his responsibilities by her husband or companion, who would reap the benefit of the law. In such an eventuality, if a woman wishes to dispose of the property she may take legal proceedings to have its designation as the family home revoked.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

* In Colombia women have the same legal capacity before the law as men in civil cases. The freedom of movement and the right to choose one's residence are guaranteed equally to women and men.

* The lack of studies on the extent of application of the laws makes it impossible to determine whether there exists in practice unequal treatment which impairs the legal capacity of women or their freedom of movement and right to choose their residence. Deeply rooted cultural factors prompt the conclusion that it is often the man who determines the family residence.

EQUALITY OF WOMEN IN MATRIMONIAL AND FAMILY LAW

Article 16

> "1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:
>
> (a) The same right to enter into marriage;
>
> (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
>
> (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
>
> (d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount.
>
> (e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;
>
> (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
>
> (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

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> (h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.
>
> 2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory."

Article 42 of the 1991 Constitution establishes the freedom of a man and a woman to establish a family either by legal or by de facto marriage. It also establishes the equality of rights and duties of the couple and the equality of children born within or out of wedlock and of adopted children. It also recognizes the right of the couple freely and responsibly to decide on the number of their children, whom they must maintain and raise during their childhood and youth or if they are disabled.

MARRIAGE

According to the Constitution, the forms of marriage, the age of marriage and the capacity to contract it, the rights and duties of the spouses, their separation and the dissolution of the marriage bond are governed by the civil law. The law also invests religious marriage with civil effects and establishes the conditions for contracting religious marriage.

Consent to marriage

According to Colombia's civil legislation, for a marriage to be valid it must have the free and mutual consent of the contracting parties and must comply with certain legal formalities and requirements. Persons aged over 18 may freely contract marriage, but minors require the express permission of their father and mother and must be above the minimum age of marriage, which is 14 for males and 12 for females.

According to the law, any young person who marries without the consent of his or her parents may be disinherited. In 1993 the Constitutional Court found that this rule was consistent with the Constitution unless the person concerned could justify his or her action before a court. This measure is remarkable, for disinheritance is an expression of an ancient parental authoritarianism and seems to disregard the evolution of the family as an institution which now strikes a balance in the relations between parents and their children, and it implies for the young person concerned a coercive restriction of the right to free development of the personality.

With regard to free will, one of the grounds on which a marriage can declared null and void is the non-consent of one or both the parties. The same applies to marriages between persons who have not attained the age of majority or when marriage has been contracted by force or intimidation. Under Colombian law, the promise of marriage known as betrothal is a private act having no legal effects. It cannot be cited as grounds for requiring that a marriage takes place or for claiming compensation for damages.

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Legal progress

* Adultery as grounds for nullification. A marriage between a woman adulterer and her partner in the adultery can be nullified on the grounds of the adultery, provided that it is proved. This rule, which discriminates against women, was tacitly amended in 1974, when the equality of rights and obligations of women and men was recognized. The measure now applies equally to a man adulterer and his partner in the adultery.

* Marriage by proxy. It is interesting to note that only from 1990 have both men and women been able to marry by proxy when one of the partners is absent. Previously this option had been reserved exclusively for men. Thus, a rule which clearly discriminated against women was amended.

* Surname following marriage. Civil and religious marriages must be registered in the Civil Registry. Since 1988 women have not been obliged to use their husband's surname, for the particle "de", which in a way had placed women in a situation of subordination to their husbands, was deleted from the citizenship certificate.

* Fight against discrimination in civil marriage. Although under the Constitution and the law civil and religious marriages are equal in terms of their effects, in fact a cultural tradition favouring Catholic marriage still prevails. This means that discrimination persists against women married in a civil ceremony and against their children.

In 1994 the Constitutional Court ordered that a girl should be admitted to a school which had refused her admission on the ground that her father and mother had been married in a civil ceremony. It thus protected her rights to education and equality. This latter right prevents discrimination based on family origins.

In 1995 the Court stated that the military authorities could not punish a woman officer for having married a divorced man, on the outside, in a civil ceremony. This action cannot be regarded as disrespect for military honour ("living in concubinage or notorious adultery").

* Equality in marriage. The Constitution and the civil law establish the equality of rights and duties of the spouses during marriage: both are obliged to remain faithful to each other and to succour and assist each other in all the circumstances of life. Similarly, the law assigns the management of the household jointly to the husband and wife. Both may freely administer and dispose of their property, and in the event of termination of their cohabitation each is assigned half of the assets and liabilities of the marriage. In addition, men and women have the same parental rights and obligations; in principle they exercise parental authority over their children jointly; the same applies to guardians and adoptive parents.

Abortion, contraception and other matters

Colombian law penalizes abortion (art. 434 of the Criminal Code), and the Constitutional Court, in a divided decision, declared the rule punishing abortion to be constitutional. This means that where abortion is concerned

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the right to choose to be a mother is not admitted, or that the rights of the unborn being prevail over that right. The right of fathers and mothers to plan the number of their children is acknowledged, but only up to the moment of conception. It was for this reason that the dissenting members of the Court took the view that the decision would damage the procreative independence of women and that a balance should be struck between the rights of women and those of unborn beings.

In accordance with this decision of the Constitutional Court, the right of women to choose to have children and decide on the number of children that they wish to have is limited to the period prior to conception; once pregnant they lose the right, for the State protects the new lives in gestation. However, even within the area of freedom accorded to women other situations may arise in which their rights are impaired, both by the authorities and by their employers, as can be seen from some of the actions of tutela.

For example, the Constitutional Court had occasion to protect the rights of a woman convict on the ground that she suffered discrimination on the ground of sex in that women's prisons held sex education courses to be a precondition for exercising the right to conjugal visits. Furthermore, if such women are able to conceive, conjugal visits have to be authorized by a court or by the prison governor, but the women must agree in writing to the implantation of a contraceptive device. For obvious reasons such requirements do not obtain in men's prisons. The Court took the view that this situation, in addition to constituting discriminatory treatment, violates women's right to decide on the number of their children and imposes a penalty not envisaged in the law, i.e. a prohibition on their conceiving while imprisoned. In this case the prison governor was cautioned to prevent discriminatory treatment and impairment of the rights of women.

In the case of a woman pilot who had been dismissed by her company after she had been refused a transfer to another unit where she could continue fertility treatment which caused her physical upsets, the Court decided not to protect her rights even provisionally. It argued that other legal remedies were available and did not take into account the woman's age (40) and the fact that the procedures of the labour courts might take a long time, so that the possibility of her becoming a mother would be diminished and the associated risks increased. This was an insensitive decision in the light the Court's own arguments recognizing that damage was being done to:

* The woman's right to social security, since the company had not complied with its obligation to enrol her and had refused to pay for the treatment.

* The right to health, since although this right includes protection of the reproductive function in accordance with the Convention, the company had decided not to regard the woman's infertility as an illness.

* The rights of the couple, since they were denied the right to procreate and freely to decide on the number of their children.

* The right to equality, for the other employees were enrolled in a social security scheme, and the woman had been discriminated against.

DIVORCE

Divorce has existed for civil marriages since 1976, and since the enactment of Law 25 of 1992 it has been available in religious marriages in accordance with the Constitution, which made the regulation of the termination by divorce of the civil effects of any marriage a matter for the law. The grounds for divorce apply equally for men and women, and they were expanded to included the common consent of the spouses and their de facto physical separation for more than two years.

However, the spouses are required to act through intermediaries in divorce proceedings; this increases the costs and makes access to justice more difficult, especially for poor couples.

In 1995 a study was carried out to determine the actual application of the law in the family and in society in Colombia by means of surveys of family court judges in the country's main towns. This study demonstrated that, although the number of divorce petitions has increased since the new law came into force, this does not mean more conflict in the family but simply that a legal solution has been found to the previous situation of de facto separations, especially in the case of Catholic marriage. The increase in the number of petitions is also a result of the option of divorce by common consent without recourse to contested administrative proceedings or a law suit.

In fact, the commonest ground for divorce is de facto physical separation for more than two years, and 70 per cent of the petitions are for divorce by common consent, indicating that a large majority of couples prefer an amicable and pacific agreement, which had been impossible before the new legislation came into force.

It is no surprise to find that 82 per cent of the minor children of divorced couples are entrusted to the care of their mother, as against only 14 per cent entrusted to the father and four per cent to some other person. Thanks to visiting rights, this situation does not usually generate any conflict. Most of the disagreements arise in connection with maintenance.

The judges also pronounced on the source of the income to maintain the family before, during and following the divorce proceedings. The results show that the economic burden on the woman increases during the divorce proceedings and the burden on the man declines; following the award of the divorce decree the burden is theoretically divided:

SOURCE OF INCOME FOR MAINTENANCE OF
THE FAMILY WHEN A COUPLE DIVORCES
(percentages)

	BEFORE	DURING	AFTER
Husband and wife	62.30	46.20	50.41
Husband	55.60	44.50	45.90
Wife	37.80	57.80	51.20

However, some of the judges noted that the husbands frequently fail to

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comply with the order and move away from the home because they do not have custody of the children or have set up another home, and that consequently the wives end up bearing the whole cost of maintaining and caring for the family. They also pointed out that sometimes the weight of this burden leads a wife to accept a reconciliation against her will, a new and hasty relationship, or a situation which impairs her self-esteem. This prompts the conclusion that it is the men who retain power and control over the relationship by controlling the economic situation.

DE FACTO MARRIAGES

In 1990, for the first time, legal recognition was accorded to de facto marriages, which had previously given rise to economic discrimination between men and women, and legislation was introduced to regulate the property of a man and woman living permanently together by establishing their equality of rights with respect to property acquired during the union.

Accordingly, the economic situation of a woman living permanently with a man is equal to that of a married woman since she is entitled to half of the property of the de facto marriage in the event of its dissolution or the death of her companion.

In 1992 the Constitutional Court took action to protect the rights of women living permanently with a man by recognizing the worth of her domestic work as a contribution to the assets of the conjugal union.

Discriminatory attitudes persist in practice towards couples who decide to live in a de facto marriage; such discrimination has a greater impact on the women and their children owing to the traditional culture which supports legal marriage and persecutes them for "immoral behaviour" when they decide to form natural unions.

An example of this situation is provided by the action of tutela brought by a college student who decided to live with her fiancé; on this ground she was prevented from continuing her studies, for the directors of the college decided that morals would be affected. The Court took action to protect the rights of the student to education, free development of the personality, intimacy and equality, arguing that the decision was hers alone to make and that the college regulations could not be allowed to impair fundamental rights on moralistic pretexts.

On several occasions the Court has protected the rights of de facto families by ordering that fathers performing military service should be allowed to live out of barracks when their partners are unprotected or unemployed. The problem came up because the legal grounds for exemption from living in barracks refer only to "marriage", and the military authorities were unwilling to extend it to de facto marriages, despite the fact that the Constitution had established the equality of legally or naturally constituted families.

EQUALITY OF CHILDREN BEFORE THE LAW

Law 29 of 1982 established the equality of children, both male and

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female, born within or out of wedlock and of adopted children specifically with regard to the right to inherit, thus terminating the legal discrimination against children previously described as illegitimate.

Other discriminatory practices persist against children born out of wedlock, as was illustrated by a 1995 action of tutela brought against a public authority which refused to grant education and medical benefits to the natural children of a pensioner, using as an excuse a regulation imposing a series of requirements which the children could not possibly meet. The Court defended their right to equality and ordered that the benefits should be awarded and the regulation amended.

RESOLUTION OF FAMILY DISPUTES

The arrangements for resolution of family disputes are adequate and effective because their objective is to reconcile the interests of the spouses or companions, with the result that these arrangements can have a broader scope than the decisions imposed by the courts. Their use in the family context helps to generate a culture of respect for constitutional values such as democracy and the fundamental rights of the individual.

In accordance with Decree 2737 of 1989, article 277, and Law 23 of 1991, article 47, the following cases may be brought to conciliation:

* The suspension of the cohabitation of the spouses and determination of the separate residence.

* Custody and care of the minor children.

* The regulation of parental visits.

* Maintenance orders.

* Physical separation in civil or church marriages.

* Division of property and dissolution of conjugal unions for reasons other than the death of one of the spouses, and all matters connected with the economic arrangements of the marriage and the rights of successors.

The following officials may take part in the conciliation process:

* The Family Ombudsman, who is a public official of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute having competence to act as mediator in all the matters described above with a view to maintaining family harmony. At present the Institute has 538 regional family ombudsmen.

* The staff of the family commissions, who perform policing functions, as described earlier, and can only act with respect to the maintenance of the children, (determination, enforcement and review of the amount of maintenance).

* The children's residence inspectors, who also have policing functions, although they may only act as mediators with respect to maintenance in

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exceptional cases when a family ombudsman or judge is not available.

* The conciliation units which are being created in the legal advice centres run by the universities, in chambers of commerce and in private organizations authorized by the Ministry of Justice.

* The family judges and the lay or municipal family mediators, since conciliation must be attempted during the legal proceedings and, outside that context, with respect to the determination of the amount of the child maintenance.

* If such conciliation fails, the necessary legal proceedings must go ahead. At present Colombia has 199 divorce court, 56 family court and 17 juvenile court judges.

PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES

Under the Constitution and the law men and women stand on an equal footing in family relations: as a couple and as parents they enjoy the same rights and have the same obligations. The following progress has been made in this area:

* The law on the dissolution of religious marriages, which legalizes de facto situations which previously could not be resolved and benefits women with respect to determination of their civil and property status and the determination of obligations for maintenance of the family and raising the children.

* The legislation regulating the property of de facto marriages, which provides legal recognition and protection of women's rights.

* The legislation establishing the equality of children born within and out of wedlock and of adopted children, which helps to combat discrimination based on family origin.

* The legislation on family property, which prevents its sale if one of the spouses does not agree.

* The use of actions of tutela, which has helped to correct practices discriminating against women.

* The establishment of special procedures and officials to resolve family disputes, and the use of conciliation.

* The legislation creating a unified information system on persons who do not meet their maintenance obligations.

The following difficulties have been encountered in the application of article 16 of the Convention:

* The persistence of moral prejudices against the various ways in which the institution of the family is now organized, despite the fact that the Constitution recognizes and protects such arrangements in Colombian society.

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* The inadequate training of police and court officers in the management of family disputes and conciliation procedures.

* The lack of effective machinery to enforce court decisions, in particular with respect to maintenance and family visits.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CST	Labour Code
EPAM	Policy for Equality and Participation of Women
CONPES	National Economic and Social Policy Council
MEN	Ministry of National Education
REPEM	People's Network for Women's Education
ICBF	Colombian Family Welfare Institute
PAMI	Maternal and Child Care Programme
FAMI	Family, Women and Children Programme
SNBFs	family commissions
EIP	economically inactive population
EAP	economically active population
UBN	unsatisfied basic needs
SENA	National Training Service
CPDH	Presidential Council on Human Rights
INTRAVISION	Colombian Radio and Television Institute
INURBE	National Urban Housing Institute
INPA	National Fisheries Institute
DAS	Administrative Department of Security
CODEMU	Departmental Council of Women of Nariño
ILO	International Labour Organization
CUT	United Federation of Workers
CCONG	Colombian Confederation of NGOs
AMCOLOMBIA	Association of Community Mothers for a Better Colombia
DANE	National Statistics Department
SISD	System of Sociodemographic Indicators for Colombia
ICFES	Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education

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ENH	National Household Survey
PWA	Population of Working Age
POS	Mandatory Health Plan
ISS	Colombian Social Security Institute
RSS	National Network of Women for Gender and Reproductive Rights
IFI	Industrial Promotion Institute
INCORA	Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute
IDEMA	Agricultural Marketing Institute
CORPOICA	Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation
DRI Fund	Rural Investment Cofinancing Fund
FINAGRO	Financing Fund for the Agriculture Sector
INPA	National Fisheries and Agriculture Institute
INAT	National Land Development Institute
UDECOs	cofinancing units
ETIs	local indigenous agencies
UMATAs	municipal technical assistance units
CNCA	National Commission on Agricultural Credit
FAG	Agricultural Guarantees Fund
ESAP	School of Public Administration
ICA	Colombian Agricultural Institute
PROFAMILIA	Information and Resources Centre for Women
CAPACITAR	Rural Organization and Training Fund
COLDEPORTES	Colombian Sports Institute
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation
REVIVIR	Revivir Ltda. (organization selling hospital products)
FEDEVIVIENDA	National Federation of Public Housing Organizations
FES	Foundation for Higher Education

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